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THE THARUS

A Study In Culture Dynamics

Forthcoming Publications of the Author

1. Spring Songs of the Tharus.
2. Tharu Jati Ke Holi Geet (In Hindi)

THE THARUS

A Study In Culture Dynamics

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with a Foreword by

DR. SAMPURNANAND

Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh

AND

with an Introduction by

PROF. C. VON FÜRER-HAIMENDORF

University of London

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To
DR. SAMPURNANAND

FOREWORD

Sociology is one of those branches of study which has not so far received from Indian scholars the attention which it deserves. To a large extent such contributions as have been made depend for their source on the great wealth of material provided by Sanskrit literature. The Ramayan and the Mahabharat, the Puranas, the Dharamsutras and the Smritis provide a glimpse of the life of society in its various aspects and levels and the development of the cultural milieu, manners and customs down the ages. For certain purposes this is the only possible method of study but it cannot take the place of that first-hand knowledge which is derived from field-work.

Anthropology, perhaps the most important branch of Sociology, is a comparatively new entrant in the world of scientific studies in our Universities. The general public knows little about it and was, for the first time, brought into intellectual contact with workers in this field with the discovery of a large number of human skeletons near Rupkund. The origin of the skeletons is still untraced and public interest has shifted elsewhere but Anthropology remains an important branch of study, interesting and instructive. Indian anthropologists will, naturally, have to carry out their field studies in the country itself. There is a vast virgin ground for such studies almost everywhere. Uttar Pradesh with its large population composed of elements obviously descended from different ethnic stocks with distinctive culture patterns offers a particularly rich field for such studies. There is hardly any cross-section of the population which can maintain its claim to racial purity. As for the culture strains, they have been undergoing a process of blending and transformation ever since they came face to face. The process has been accelerated in the immediate past by deliberate effort. The

impact of Western culture and civilization, bringing the benefits of education and travel in its wake and initiating rapid changes in the social and economic set-up, has upset such balances as social forces might have struck in the past and is effecting a rapid metamorphosis of the whole pattern of life. A sociological study carried out at such a time will be immensely useful because it will be a study of the dynamics of human life, behaviour and belief.

Dr. Srivastava has been interesting himself in the Tharus for quite a long time. This group of people, unfamiliar except perhaps by name to most men outside the small strips of territory inhabited by them, deserves such attention. The present monograph is a result of patient study carried on for some years and is probably the first work of its kind.

Even a cursory glance at the monograph will show the nature of the painstaking study carried out by Dr. Srivastava. We have before us the living picture of the life of these people in all its various aspects. We see them as they are, at home, in their fields and in their social gatherings. We get glimpses of their significant beliefs as expressed in their rites and customs and of the relationships which they have managed to work out with those forces which, in some form or other, govern the universe and all things, sentient and insentient, which it contains. We clearly see the result, on their lives, of the impact of Hindu culture, on which has been superimposed the powerful pressure exerted by modern civilization. We see before us a people emerging out of the shell in which it was encased for centuries into a broader pattern of life.

The value of such studies cannot be overemphasised. The Science of Sociology would remain the province of intelligent speculation but for such studies, and Dr. Srivastava is to be congratulated for the very valuable contribution which he has made to the literature of social science in India.

I had occasion to see the book in its original form as the thesis presented by Dr. Srivastava for his Ph.D. degree and found

it interesting. I am glad it is now being placed with necessary alterations and additions before a wider public. Let me hope it will receive the appreciation it so richly deserves.

Chief Minister,
Uttar Pradesh,
July, 1958

SAMPURNANAND

INTRODUCTION

Dr. Srivastava's study of a section of the Tharu tribe will be welcomed by all those interested in the ethnography of India. Up to now the Tharus have received little attention on the part of anthropologists, and even their exact distribution is still a matter of speculation. Besides those inhabiting the Tarai regions of Uttar Pradesh, there are large numbers of Tharus inside the frontiers of Nepal, dispersed as it seems over an area extending all along the foot-hills from the Sarda River on the western border between India and Nepal to the valley of the Kosi River in Eastern Nepal.

Though predominantly Mongoloid in their physical make-up, the Tharus appear to be distinct from the Mongoloid tribes occupying the middle ranges of Nepal, and the description of their cultural characteristics contained in Dr. Srivastava's ethnographic study confirms the view that they represent the northernmost extension of the Middle Indian aboriginal races rather than an offshoot of any of the Mongoloid peoples inhabiting the mountain country south of the Himalayan ranges. Too little is as yet known of the Tharus of Nepal to permit a more definite view on their racial and cultural affinities, but from the author's account of the section found in the Tarai areas of the Naini Tal District it would seem that most of their cultural characteristics confirm roughly to the culture pattern prevailing among the aboriginal tribes of Middle India.

The strong influence of ideas stemming from Hindu concepts of caste is apparent in the emergence of endogamous divisions of different status. Social advance is conceived in the terms of an imitation of high caste customs and practices, and the Tharu reform movements are a striking example of the educated aboriginals' tendency to see salvation not so much in a development of tribal values, but in the assimilation to the culture pattern of the dominant Hindu castes of the region. Inherent in this situation is the tendency to introduce

among tribal and other backward populations just those social practices and attitudes which progressive Hindu opinion in the centres of Indian national life is in the process of shedding. The demands of the Tharus' Social Reform Council listed on page 107 show this tendency very clearly. Aiming at a restriction of the free movement of women, at the introduction of rigid dietary rules and at the discontinuation of social relations with groups of lower ritual status, these demands evince an attitude altogether foreign to the traditional tribal outlook. Experience in other parts of India has shown that such puritan tendencies result almost invariably from the contact of aborigines with the exponents of conservative Hindu social philosophy, and whereas caste-consciousness is on the decrease among India's intellectual and political elite, it is being newly introduced among tribal societies which used to be casteless and egalitarian.

I hope that Dr. Srivastava will continue to observe the development of the Tharus' social and cultural life under the impact of increasing contact with members of other ethnic groups, and particularly with the politically and economically dominant high-caste Hindu communities. A detailed study of this contact, which has been sketched only in outline in the present general ethnographic account, should be of interest to anthropologists and social planners alike. Much is being done in present-day India to alleviate the economic difficulties of tribal populations, but in order to maintain a tribe's self-respect and sense of well-being it is equally necessary to affirm the intrinsic value of its traditional culture, and to dissuade its educated members from the misguided view that a mechanical imitation of high caste manners and practices is the only road to social respectability and political advance.

Indian anthropologists have the important task of interpreting tribal cultures to their fellow countrymen, and to create thereby a climate of public opinion favourable to the growth of tribal life unhampered by such restrictive and unimaginative movements as that inaugurated by the puritani-

cal sponsors of the Tharus' Social Reform Council. For such movements with their irrational ban on many profitable economic activities, such as poultry farming, and the retrogressive insistence on social attitudes diametrically opposed to all the tendencies of India's intellectual leadership, seriously jeopardize the tribesmen's chances of attaining a position of material prosperity and social harmony. In the traditional diversity of Indian cultural manifestations there is room for the free and easy community life of tribal folk as well as for the stern rigidity of orthodox high caste behaviour, and no one is more favourably placed to assess their respective implications than the social anthropologist. Though he may wish to avoid value judgments on issues of social policy, he would fail in his professional no less than in his civic duty if he desisted from analysing the results of deliberate interference with tribal customs and values, be it on the part of well meaning outsiders or of ambitious members of the tribe. The author of the present study has not shunned this duty, and in dealing, for instance, with the Tharu reform movements he states clearly that 'many of these reforms have come in direct conflict with the material and religious needs of the Tharus' (p. 111).

Social reformers, inspired by ideals which though impracticable are sincerely believed in, are not likely to heed an anthropologist's warning, but his counsel should weigh with social planners inside the Administration and particularly with the members of those agencies specifically responsible for the welfare of India's tribal populations. Dr. Srivastava's book should provide ample food for thought to all those immediately concerned with the future of the Tharu tribe.

CHRISTOPH VON FURER-HAIMENDORF

School of Oriental and African Studies,
University of London,
August 1958.

PREFACE

My interest in anthropological field work goes back to the year 1947, when I undertook a tour of Chhota Nagpur Tribes in Bihar in connection with my work for my M. A. degree. Later, it was my teacher, Dr. D. N. Majumdar who suggested to me to take up research work among the Tharus of Naini Tal Tarai. Dr. Majumdar had already written extensively about these people and had conducted several pioneering serological and anthropometric studies during the Census Operations of 1941. The present work is largely based upon the investigations carried on during my research career from 1948 to 1950 and is the outcome of two years' concentrated study of the Tharus in Naini Tal Tarai of Uttar Pradesh. On the basis of the field study, I submitted a Doctoral dissertation, "The Dynamics of Culture Change in Naini Tal Tarai of Uttar Pradesh" in Lucknow University. The manuscript submitted for the Ph. D. degree has been considerably changed both in its factual as well as literary presentation. Therefore, the present title "The Tharus—A Study In Culture Dynamics" has been carefully chosen to denote the scope and nature of this study.

Various accounts of the Tharus and their culture have been written by the Government officials and anthropologists, such as, J. C. Nesfield, S. Knowles, W. Crooke, H. R. Risley, E. T. Atkinson, Dr. Buchanan, H. R. Nevill, A. C. Turner, H. D. Pradhan and D. N. Majumdar. But most of these writers have not made any intensive study of Tharu culture as a dynamic process, though their works have been helpful in an analysis of the historic past of the Tharus. It is for the first time that a comprehensive ethnographic study of the Tharus of the Naini Tal Tarai has been presented in this book. All the aforesaid authors have concentrated their attention mainly on the Tharus of the Gonda, Pilibhit and Kheri districts.

The aim of this work is to examine the results of contact of the Tharus with the people of higher civilization. The

attempt has been to indicate the extent and nature of changes in the culture of the Tharus of Naini Tal Tarai as a result of either deliberate adoption or unconscious imitation of the higher cultures. An endeavour has been made to further analyse whether changes have come in Tharu culture through the processes of 'simple adoption' or 'acculturation', 'acceptance' and 'adaptation' or 'assimilation'. The psychological change that has resulted from culture contact is one of the most important aspects of this study. That is why the emphasis has been laid on the study of culture as a dynamic process rather than on the end-results of culture change. It is needless to say that in such a study no factor in Tharu culture, however, insignificant, can be safely omitted. Therefore, care has been taken to describe in detail all the aspects of Tharu culture and then to estimate whether, on the whole, the change has been beneficial to the Tharus or not. By their location the Tharus are surrounded by people who profess three different religions, namely, Hinduism, Islam, and Sikhism. It has, therefore, become necessary to assess the contributions of each to the configuration of total change. Such a study, however, does not involve any comparison of the merits of different religions and cultures. It only focusses upon how the basic needs of the Tharus were served by the institutions of their indigenous culture and how far their economic, social and religious patterns of life have been modified by their contacts of other religious groups, particularly the Hindus.

I took my first field trip to the Tarai in February, 1948. This was primarily undertaken to make myself familiar with the region, its people and their dialect. I stayed in the dak-bungalows at Khatima and Sitarganj tahsils during this visit. Fortunately my stay of four months coincided with the Holi festival when I reaped a rich harvest of Tharu folk-songs and folk literature during this period. I made myself accepted to the people by participating in their songs and dances, and therefore, during my subsequent visits I preferred to stay with the Tharus. This was greatly responsible in developing friendly and intimate relations with them. Thereafter I could share their life as one of them in their

rites and rituals, ceremonies and other festivities. Besides I made extensive tours through out the length and breadth of the Tarai Estate following the same manner of establishing contacts with the Tharus for collecting information. The methods and techniques used for this work were participant-observation, interviews, case study as well as the use of informants. The house-to-house census of thirty three villages provided statistical background to the study and made a lot of personal, social and religious data available to me. Fifty genealogies which were collected at the time of enquiry further helped me to trace the nomenclature and old customs of the Tharus.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I take this opportunity to thank my respected teacher, Dr. D. N. Majumdar, Professor and Head of the Department of Anthropology, Lucknow University, for his able and inspiring guidance, practical and timely suggestions and keen interest shown in my research work. I owe a great deal to him for my earlier training in anthropological theory and field research. I am also indebted to the Government of Uttar Pradesh and specially to its Chief Minister, Hon'ble Dr. Sampurnanand who has demonstrated his active interest in anthropological research in our State by granting me a research stipend of Rs. 100/- p. m. for two years amounting to Rs. 2,400/- during his tenure as the Minister of Education. It was perhaps for the first time that an encouragement of this kind was given by our State Government to conduct an anthropological enquiry. I am very thankful to Prof. N. K. Sidhant, then Dean Faculty of Arts of Lucknow University and the present Vice-Chancellor of Calcutta University as well as to late Shri Acharya Narendra Dev, the Vice-Chancellor of Lucknow University for their keen interest shown in my research work by awarding a fellowship of Rs. 720/-. These grants have considerably helped me in carrying out an intensive study of the changing pattern of Tharu culture which might not have been possible otherwise. I also feel grateful to Prof. Kali Prasad, Head of the

Department of Psychology and Honorary Librarian of Lucknow University for providing library facilities and personal encouragement both during the course of research work and the publication of this book.

I planned to publish this work much earlier but owing to the paucity of funds, it could not be arranged. Further, I was also interrupted by my visit to U. S. A. as a Fulbright and Ford Foundation Fellow to do Post-Doctoral research in the Department of Social Relations at Harvard University. I am highly indebted to the authorities of Agra University, particularly the Vice-Chancellor, Sh. K. P. Bhatnagar, Dr. R. N. Saksena, the Director, Institute of Social Sciences and Dr. L. P. Mathur, the Registrar, who have kindly sanctioned a grant of Rs. 2,250/- for the publication of this book. I must acknowledge with gratitude my obligation to my teacher and colleague, Dr. Saksena, who has given all possible encouragement and valuable guidance in publishing it.

I am very thankful to Dr. Cora Du Bois, Professor of Anthropology, Harvard University and Professor C. von Fürer-Haimendorf of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, who have highly appreciated my original work as the external examiners of Doctoral Dissertation. I have been greatly benefitted by their valuable suggestions and comments in revising my work and in presenting it into the present form.

I am extremely obliged to Dr. Sampurnanand and Prof. Haimendorf for writing inspiring Foreword and Introduction to this book.

I may also express my thanks to the editors of 'The Eastern Anthropologist', 'Man in India' and 'Agra University Journal of Research', who have published some of my articles on the Tharus. The articles, 'Spring Festival among the Tharus', 'Some Problems of Culture Contact among the Tharus', published in The Eastern Anthropologist, 'Diwali Festival among the Tharus', in Man in India and finally 'Directed Cultural Change among the Tharus', appeared in Agra University Journal of Research, are partly reproduced in this book.

Looking into the volume of this book with all its illustrations and maps, the cost of publication has certainly increased beyond the grant sanctioned by the Agra University. I, therefore, thank the Proprietor of Agra University Press, Mr. H. K. Kapur for printing this book within the specified sum only and extending his valuable cooperation to me.

Thanks are due to M/S Chadda and Nityanand Mahapatra of the Government School of Arts and Crafts Lucknow for preparing drawings and plans of villages and houses, to Mr. Satya Pal Singh for preparing maps, to Mr. Satish Bahadur, my colleague, for designing the cover and to Mr. R.P. Pachauri, my stenotypist, for correcting the proofs of this book. I am also thankful to my wife, Mrs. Satya Srivastava, M. A., M. Ed., Lecturer in Women's Training College Dayalbagh, for preparing the index of this book.

I will be failing in my duty if I do not express my gratitude to my Tharu friends, who provided all possible assistance in collecting data. Among these, Bhaggamal Bharara of Naugamath Bisaunta, Karn Singh of Kuakhera in Khatima tehsil, Bairagi Singh of Nakuliya, Pitam Ram Singh of Audali, Madan Singh and Ram Charan of Barkidandi, and Dharam Singh of Tharu Tisaur in Sitarganj tehsil deserve special mention.

If this study leads to pave the way for the material and cultural progress of the Tharus who have contributed a great deal in the preparation of this book, the author will feel amply compensated.

S. K. SRIVASTAVA

15th August, 1958,
Institute of Social Sciences,
Agra University, Agra.

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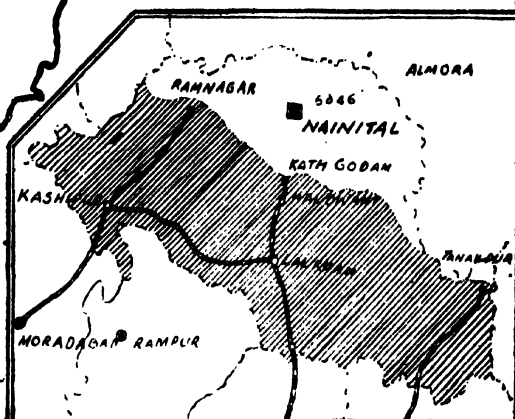
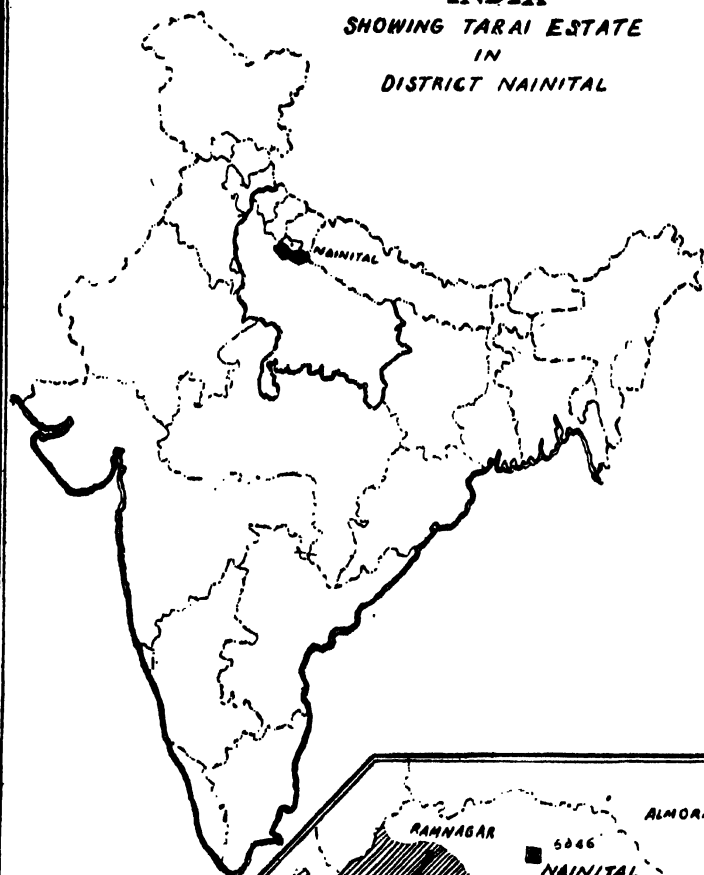
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INDIA
SHOWING TARAI ESTATE
IN
DISTRICT NAINITAL



I

TARAI—THE HABITAT OF THE THARUS

Location: The Tarai, the main habitat of the Tharus, is a Government Estate in the Naini Tal district of Uttar Pradesh (India). The Tarai stretches from the Sarda river on the east to the Bazpur Pargana on the west and lies between $28^{\circ} 43'$ and $29^{\circ} 26'$ north latitude and between $78^{\circ} 53'$ and 80° east longitude. It is bounded on the north by the Kumaon district, on the south by the districts of Bareilly, Moradabad, Rampur and Pilibhit, on the west by Kashipur Tahsil and on the east by Nepal.

The Tarai is a vast alluvial land lying at the foot of the Himalayas bordering densely populated Gangetic plain of the south. It comprises a long narrow strip of the country running for 90 miles along the foot of the hills with an area of 589,359 acres or 920.8 square miles. The Tarai extends to the whole sub-mountain region and in U. P. to the border districts of Naini Tal, Gonda, Kheri, Gorakhpur, Pilibhit and Basti.

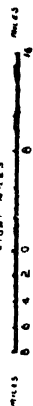
The Soil: The soil of the Tarai is almost everywhere a moist alluvial deposit. It is chiefly loam, clay and clay-sand but the clay predominates. The soil is naturally fertile and owing to its inherent capacity, the out-turn is satisfactory so that it neither requires hard labour nor much manure on the part of the farmer. The accumulated deposit of centuries of grass and foliage has contributed to enrich the humus content of the soil with a heavy loam. This is more true of the western region of the Estate.

Drainage: The drainage system of the Tarai consists of the streams and rivers which flow directly from the Himalayas and those which are fed by the springs originating in the swamps of the region itself. Hence, one comes across a network of spring-fed streams and rivers from north to south. So numerous are these rivers and of such little importance for the purpose of scientific irrigation that it is necessary to study only the important ones, such as, the Sarda river on the extreme east. From east to west, we have Saniha, Chauka, Khakra, Lohiya, Jagbura and Kamin in Pargana Bilheri; the Deoha and Kailas in Pargana Nanakmata; the Eastern Bahgul in Pargana Kilpuri; the Dhaura, Kichha, Baror and the Western Bahgul in Pargana Rudarpur; the Dhimri, Bhakra, Nihal and Baur in Pargana Gadarpur; the Dabka, Ghuga and the Naiya in Pargana Bazpur. All these rivers resemble one another in their main characteristics and form the tributaries of the Ramganga river which falls into the Ganges in the Hardoi district. As Hutton observes, "These Tarai streams are blocked in their courses with fallen trees and overhanging branches to an extent almost inconceivable to one, not acquainted with them, and in high flood the velocity is greatly diminished by their presence".¹ The drainage of this tract as a whole ultimately leads to water-logging resulting into breeding of mosquitoes and finally into unhealthy climate, as most of these rivers are subject to heavy floods during the rains. They are useful for irrigation but hardly any one of them is navigable.

Irrigation: From the earliest times the inhabitants of the Tarai have been using the streams and rivers for irrigation. The simplest and most common method employed by them was to construct dams wherever required across the small rivers and the streams. This had caused a ruinous effect both to the land and to the climate. At present the Irrigation Branch of the Public Works Department controls the waters between the Sarda river on the east and the Bazpur on the

[illegible]

SCALE ON: INCH 50
EIGHT MILES



west comprising the Parganas, namely Bilheri, Nanakmata, Kilpuri and a great part of Rudarpur. The canal system of the Tarai is as follows:-

(i) The Eastern Bahgul system of canals provides for the irrigation of Kilpuri Pargana and the Maina Jhundi portion of Nanakmata. It connects the districts of Pilibhit and Bareilly.

(ii) Kichha and Paha systems of canals are no better than *Kachcha* drains, as they are found in a broken condition.

The system of Government canals covers only a little over half the total Tarai area, so that the old method persists on a large tract to cause sufficient water-logging and to spread diseases all over the region.

Climate: The proximity of the hills to the Tarai retards the circulation of the air and makes the climate of the region very trying at all times of the year. The direct and refracted sun's heat makes it close, hot and muggy. In general, the Tarai experiences extreme climate, summer being severely hot and winter very cold. It receives most of its rain in June, July, August and September; winter has only a few showers. The average annual rainfall of this region is 50 to 60 inches. During the rainy season when the forest undergrowth grows up, the climate is extremely unhealthy; during the rest of the year the climate, though enervating, is not so unhealthy. Because of the unhealthy climate Atkinson characterised the habitat of the Tharus as the region of *Mar*, 'the land of death.'¹

Flora: The forests of the Tarai are generally of poor value and mostly contain scrub jungles. Over a large part of the area there are a few valuable forests except those of *haldu*, *dhak*, *shisham*, *khai*, *rauni* and other *kukat* trees of inferior quality but the tract is of considerable importance as grazing land, fuel and fodder reserves. The presence of these

1. E. T. Atkinson, 'The Himalayan Districts of North Western Provinces of India', 1886, Vol. III, p. 697.

forest areas has slowly but surely encroached upon the cultivated areas, affording wild animals greater shelter and bringing them nearer to cultivation and habitation.

Fauna: These forests abound in carnivorous animals. Wild beasts including tigers, panthers, elephants, bears, blue bulls and many species of deer have played a lively part in the continual deterioration and destruction of the tract. The greatest amount of destruction is done by the elephants to the villages and fields that border the forests mainly lying in the north.

About a century back tigers were very numerous in these forests, but owing to the extension and growth of cultivation in recent years and the greater use of arms and effective weapons, they are definitely on the decrease. The panther or leopard is much more common in this region; the four-horned antelope or *chausinga* (Teraceros Quaricornis), the *jarau* (*Rusa Aristotelis*), *chital* (*Axis Anaculatus*), *parha* or hog deer (*Hylaphus Porcinus*) are abundantly found in the grassy swamps and jungles. The wolves and jackals inhabit the whole sub-montane region of the Tarai. Monkeys from all over Uttar Pradesh are captured and let loose in this area to play havoc with crops in the fields. Python is frequently found in the Tarai swamps.

This tract is a happy hunting ground for the ornithologists as hundreds of species of game birds, namely, jungle fowls, quails, partridges, peacocks and snipes are found in a large number in the Tarai forests. In addition to this, fishes of all kinds and description abound the streams and rivers.

Domestic Animals: Cows, oxen, bullocks, goats and only a small number of ponies and sheep are reared by the people of the Tarai. The cow, however, forms the bulk of cattle population of this region as it supplies to the farmers the bullocks to help them in their cultivation.

The picture that we get of the habitat of the Tharus is a land of numerous sluggish streams and water-locked morasses, full of forests and swamps with scattered patches

of cultivation generally found in the southern half. The northern half chiefly consists of the large savannhas of tall and thick-tangled grasses and thickets of reeds with tracts of forests mostly of an inferior nature ; and a net-work of spring-fed streams bordered by overhanging trees and tall sarpat grass and tangled growth of creepers that can hardly be negotiated even by the elephants. The country is suitable for grazing purpose, though, of late, there has been a marked extension of cultivation from the south to the line of streams in the north.

Cultivation: Owing to fertility of the soil the cultivation has made a rapid progress in the Tarai. The average area brought under cultivation is 140,000 acres, though there still remains a considerable waste land. Formerly the Tarai was essentially a rice-producing area, the late dry seasons, however, have encouraged *rabi* (autumn) cultivation and other additional *kharif* (spring) crops. The principal crops grown in this region, are rice, *juar*, turmeric, sunnhemp under *kharif* and wheat, gram, peas, mustard, tobacco, red pepper, sugar cane, under *rabi*.

Means of Communication and Transport: The means of communication in the Tarai are so poor that it is not at all economical to transport field produce to distant markets. Therefore, the cultivators very often have to part with their produce at very cheap rates to the nearest buyers who can manage to cart it. The only track of railway in this region is that of N. E. Railway which hardly connects the main habitat of the Tharus. It passes through the Tahsil of Kichha on the main line of Lucknow to Kathgodam and one of its branch lines runs from Pilibhit to Tanakpur via Khatima Tahsil. In this region the metalled roads are rare except that from Haldwani to Bareilly via Kichha, though unmetalled roads are numerous. The low lying portions of the country are not easily accessible during a good part of the year, specially during the rainy season. More frequently the thorough fares in common use are no

better than mere tracks cut through the forest and difficult for any country cart to negotiate.

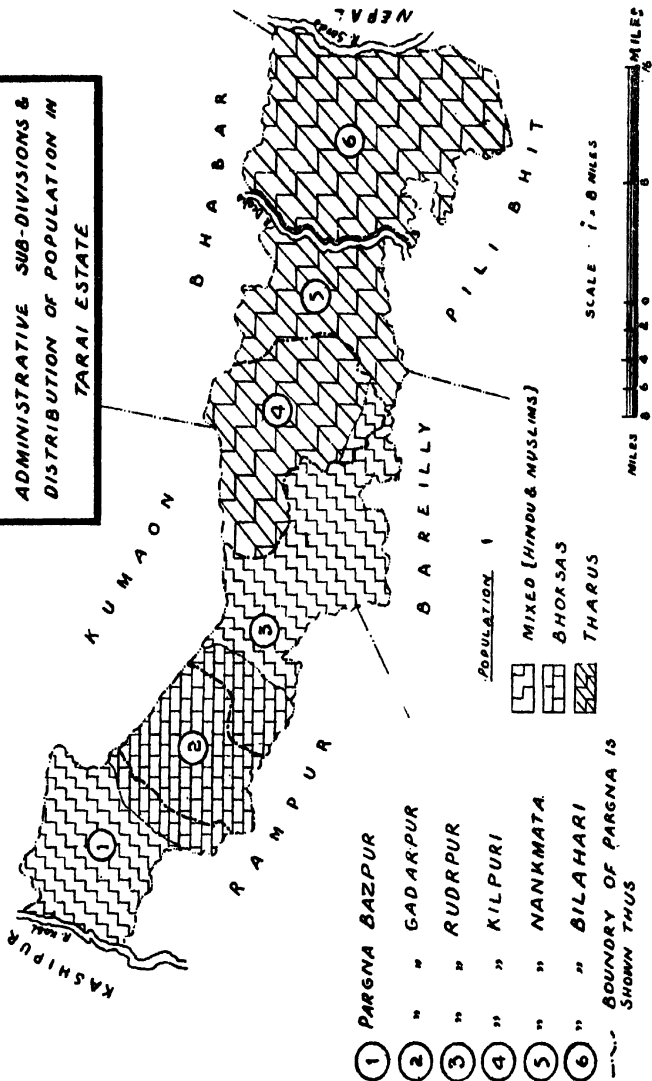
Hence, the habitat of the Tharus is most inadequately connected by means of transport and communications which hinder their easy and direct contact with people of other parts of the State.

Administrative Sub-Division: The Tarai Estate is administratively divided into four tahsils, namely, Kichha, Bazpur, Sitarganj and Khatima and is for all practical purposes under the management of the Superintendent of the Tarai and Bhabar Estate. Formerly, the Kichha Tahsil comprised the whole of the Tarai and included six Parganas of Bazpur, Gadarpur, Rudarpur, Kilpuri, Nanakmata and Bilheri; the present system of Estate administration has brought the Parganas of Bazpur and Gadarpur under the control of Bazpur Tahsil; similarly, Rudarpur under Kichha; Nanakmata and Kilpuri under Sitarganj; and Bilheri under Khatima Tahsil. Of these four tahsils only the last two, that is, Khatima and Sitarganj are inhabited by the Tharus whose changing culture is the subject of our study. Although the area is divided into the tahsils described above, the Tharus are still in the habit of thinking in terms of smaller administrative units, the Parganas described below.

Pargana Bilheri (Khatima Tahsil): Bilheri is the largest Pargana in the Tarai as its total area is 150,706 acres or 220 square miles consisting of 91 villages. Out of these 86 are under the direct management of the Government and the remaining are under the *Mustajars* (the contractors). It is the easternmost Pargana bounded on the east by the Sarda river which separates it from Nepal. In the north lie the taluqs of the Almora district; in the south, Pilibhit district; and in the west the Chaubhainsi Bhabar and pargana Nanakmata from which it is separated by the Kaumin and the Deoha rivers.

Bilheri is, perhaps, the most unhealthy Pargana of the Tarai and is populated mostly by the Tharus who have

ADMINISTRATIVE SUB-DIVISIONS &
DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION IN
TARAI ESTATE



managed to withstand successfully the malarious climate of the tract by clearing jungle and the grass with the exception of two large forest tracts of Banabasa and Surai. Now a large number of the Tharu villages are found situated in a broad open plain

The two important *kachcha* (unmetalled) roads of this Pargana are the main Tarai roads from Melaghat to Khatima and Sitarganj and another road from Pilibhit to Tanakpur. This pargana has been brought into line with the developments common to other administrative units and has Khatima as its tahsil headquarter. Khatima is also an important centre as it has a number of offices, namely, a tahsil office, a canal office, a post office, a police and a railway station, a Vernacular Final school, a dispensary, a veterinary hospital, two dak bungalows, a few shops including the well-patronized liquor shop and a bi-weekly market place.

Pargana Kilpuri (Sitarganj Tahsil): It is a Pargana of the eastern Tarai lying between Rudarpur on the west and south-west and Nanakmata on the east and south-east. In the north are the *pattis* of Chhakhata and Chaubhainsi Bhabar, while the remaining southern portion is bounded by Pilibhit district. Kilpuri Pargana is smaller than Bilheri as the former is only 12 miles wide and 14 miles long from north to south with a total area of 80,667 acres or 126 square miles, and has 44 villages. It consists very largely of forests which stretch further south here than in any other portions of the Tarai. The population of the Tharus is of fluctuating character due to the attacks of wild animals, particularly the elephants.

This Pargana is well provided with *kachcha* roads, namely, the main Tarai road from Melaghat to Sitarganj. From Sitarganj it branches off westwards to Kichha running direct through the forest and southwards through the fields of Naka and Sisaiya. Towards the north there are two *kachcha* forest roads, one providing unbroken communication to Chorgaliya in the Bhabar and the other connecting Sitarganj with

Haldwani. To the south there is a road to Pilibhit and Majhauri in Bilheri Pargana.

Kilpuri Pargana has its headquarters at Sitarganj where the Government have recently opened a tahsil office, a canal office, a post office, a police out-post, a Vernacular Primary school, a dispensary, a veterinary hospital, two dak bungalows, a few shops including a liquor shop and an important bi-weekly market place.

Pargana Nanakmata (Sitarganj Tahsil): This Pargana is the smallest administrative unit of the Tarai as its total area is 51, 136 acres or 80 square miles and consists of 77 villages which are mostly inhabited by the Tharus. It forms the eastern Tarai situated between Bilheri Pargana on the east and Kilpuri on the west. To the south lies Pilibhit district and to the north the Chaubhainsi Bhabar.

The village Nanakmata, from which the Pargana takes its name, owes its origin to the shrine of Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikh religion. Mention of this shrine has been made as early as the reign of Aurangzeb. The shrine still maintains a good deal of its original sanctity. For all practical purposes the Tharus of this Pargana look to the official supervision of Sitarganj Tahsil. Recently, the Estate authorities have opened a small dispensary and a seed store to provide immediate help to the inhabitants.

Population: The population of the Tarai is a mixed one. It is composed of the following tribes and castes:—

- (i) The Tharus and the Bhoksas among the aboriginal tribes.
- (ii) The Brahmins, Rajputs, Kurmis, Lodhs, Doms and Chamars among the Hindus.
- (iii) The Sheikhs, Pathans, Turkis, Mewatis, Ranis, and Faqirs among the Muslims.

The largest element are the Tharus who are practically inhabiting two Tarai tahsils, namely, Khatima and Sitarganj. Although they are concentrated in these two tahsils of Naini Tal Tarai, they also have their settlements in the districts of

[illegible]

KUMAON

**MAP OF
TAHSIL SITARGANJ**

BHABAR

BAREILLY

SITARGANJ

Legend:

- TAHSIL BOUNDARY
- == UN METTALLED ROAD
- ~ RIVER & NALA

- P TANSIL BOUNDARY

~~UNMETALLED ROAD~~ UN METTALLED ROAD

 RIVER & NALA

Gonda, Gorakhpur, Bahraich, Kheri and Pilibhit. At every census during the last 60 years (1881-1941) the Tharus have been separately tabulated to show the increase and decrease in their population as given below :—

TABLE I

Table Showing the Increase and Decrease in Tharu Population from 1881 to 1941 in the United Provinces (Uttar Pradesh)*

District	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921	1931	1941
Naini Tal	...	15,397	16,085	19,372	18,488	20,753	15,495
Gonda	...	2,475	1,460	3,458	2,990	4,014	2
Kheri	...	1,975	1,558	1,916	4,914	3,624	4,939
Gorakhpur	...	3,072	2,747	2,033	1,272	1,635	1,272
Bahraich	...	2,311	1,559	842	1,215	1,531	641
Pilibhit	...	46	60	22	11	4	...
Basti	...	208	59	76	3	2	11
Garhwal	...	...	...	...	...	...	19
Moradabad	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
Total	27,172	25,484	23,128	27,719	28,893	31,563	22,381

If the census figures are reliable, it is clear from the above table that from 1881 to 1931 the Tharus have increased from 27,172 to 31,563, that is, 16·2% in the whole area; while in the Naini Tal Tarai they have shown an increase from 15,397 to 20,753, that is, 34·8% in a steady manner except in the decade between 1911-21 when influenza was responsible for their considerable mortality. In the census of 1941 again a fall of 33·2% from 20,753 to 15,495 was recorded in their population. This decrease¹ in the population of the Tharus of Naini Tal Tarai was attributed to the epidemic of cholera which broke out in 1937 in a virulent form.

* Tharus were not enumerated separately at 1951 Census.

1. Another reason of this fall in population is said to have been the migration of the Tharus to the Nepal Tarai.

Thus, the Tharus, on the whole, may not have shown a steady phenomenal increase in their population in every decade but it certainly shows that they have adapted to and successfully survived the unhealthy climate of the Tarai.

Short History of the Tarai : The Tarai has many interesting historic ruins. The stupas prove that the place was of a great interest and importance at the time of the Buddhist Kings. Again, Sitabani near Kota is said to be the Ashram of Rishi Balmiki where Sita lived in her exile having been turned out from Onchpuri by Ram Chandra. During the Mahabharat period this tract was under Vidharva Kings who were renowned for their cattle wealth. The Pandavas also lived here during their one year of secret exile. Kichhak, generalissimo of the Vidharva King, was believed to have been slain by Bhimsen some where south-west of Kichha and Arjun defeated the armies of Kaurvas, which were fetching all the cattle wealth of the Vidharvas. Extensive ruins in this part show that there were populous cities and powerful kingdoms. During the Gupta period the Kingdom of Karikeyapuri (Kumaon) was so powerful that it defied the arms of Gupta Kings.

Cattle rearing had always been one of the main occupations of the people in this tract from times immemorial.

There is no record of how Buddhism disappeared from this region, because there is no historical evidence prior to the formation of the Katyuri in the Kumaon which occupied the whole of the Tarai. But there are indications that from the 7th to the 11th centuries A. D. the Tarai had lapsed into wilderness and its towns were destroyed or allowed to fall into ruin. From the Muslim historians and general traditions we gather that in the 11th century A. D. this tract was covered with dense forests interspersed with patches of grazing land and cultivated fields. The inhabitants of this region were occupied chiefly in rearing cattle, as the scanty cultivation was barely sufficient for their living. Crude temporary dwelling places were the rule, but there were forts to which the graziers could seek refuge in

times of danger. It was not till a hundred years later that the Rajputs entered Katehr and gave it their name. These, harassed in turn by the Muslims, crossed the Ramganga river and brought much of the forest land under cultivation.¹

In the 13th century A. D. Nasiruddin and Balban attacked and ravaged this territory and later Feroz Shah followed the same. For some time this territory remained under the Moghul Emperors. In 1565—97 A. D. Akbar conferred a grant of *Chaurasi Mal* to Rudra Chandra, the ruler of Kumaon, who fought a successful battle for Akbar in the Punjab. The reference of *Chaurasi Mal* is given in the *Ain-i-Akbari*² in the following account of this sub-montane tract: "The entire *Sarkar* contained 21 *Mohals* assessed at 4,04,37,700 dams which are equivalent to Rs. 20,21,885 (Rupee 1 = 20 double dams). Several *Mohals*, namely, Sahajgar and Gadarpur, however, yielded no revenue and the district as a whole was supposed to yield 69,37,700 dams, that is, Rs. 1,73,445 as its revenue. The area between the Sarda river in the east and Pitaudi in the West within *Chaurasi Mal* (84 kos) was known as *Naulakha Mal*, as 9 lacs were assessed on it."

The local history of the Tarai during the 17th and 18th centuries was very much unsettled till the British occupied the territory in 1802 and brought it under their own management. In the beginning of the British rule Sir Henry Ramsay tried his best to improve the Tarai area by developing a system of canals and encouraged the people to settle here by giving every possible help from the State fund. By 1891, 140,000 acres of land were brought under cultivation in the Tarai.

With the passing out of India into Indian hands the Tarai Estate for the first time was brought under the management of an Indian Superintendent. The State Government have now set forth a number of development plans³ to improve the

1. H. R. Nevill, 'District Gazetteer of Naini Tal'. 1901, Vol. XXXIV P. 199.
2. *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. I, p. 375.
3. Radha Kant, 'Naini Tal Tarai Colonization Scheme for Ex-Service-men', Report of the Tarai and Bhabar Development committee, 1947.

conditions of this region and a scheme for colonization of ex-servicemen is being given effect to. The effects of contacts brought about by these heterogenous elements on the Tharu population are a matter of speculation.

II

THE THARUS : THEIR ORIGIN AND RACIAL AFFINITIES

Traditions Regarding Tharu Origin.

The authors who have traced the origin of the Tharus hold conflicting views on the subject. They trace the origin of the Tharus to various interesting etymological sources, for example, to *tahre*¹ which means 'they halted' after their alleged flight into the Tarai forests; or to *tarhuwa*² which means 'became wet', alluding to the swampy nature of the region; or to *thatharana*³, signifying 'trembling' or 'quaking' during their flight from Hastinapur to the Tarai after a fierce battle between the Rajputs and the Muslims. S. Knowles traces the origin of the Tharus to the word *tharu*⁴ of hill dialect, meaning a 'paddler'. Another author refers them to the word *athawaru*⁵, that is 'an eighth day serf'—a man who is bound to give his lord one day's free labour in the week on his field. But J. C. Nesfield⁶ rejects this source with the argument that the traditional indolence of the Tharus and their aversion to service and their incapacity for sustained field labour could never have subjected them

1. The etymology is taken from Oudh Gazetteer, 1887, Vol. II. p. 126.
2. North Western Provinces Census Report, 1867, Vol. I. p. 61.
3. North-West Provinces Gazetteer, 1881, Vol. VI, p. 358.
4. S. Knowles, 'Gospel in Gonda' p. 214.
5. Journal, Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1847, p. 450.
6. J. C. Nesfield, 'Description of the Manners, Industries, Religion of the Tharus and Bogsa Tribes of Upper India'. Calcutta Review, 1885, Vol. XXX-1, p. 115.

as serfs to any landlord. Crooke traces their origin to the word *tharu*¹, denoting a 'wine bibber'. This name is believed to have been given to the Tharus by one of the Kshatriya Rajas of the plains, who was simply amazed at the Tharus' thirst and capacity for drinking liquor. Nesfield, on the other hand, holds the view that the word *thar*², which in the colloquial dialect of the lowest classes means 'a man of the forest', is more correctly applicable to these people, because it describes the status of the tribe. Furthermore, Dr. Buchanan³ introduces another idea when he makes a reference to the expulsion of the Gurkhas from Magadh by a people called Tharu. These are said to have descended from the hills and spread over every part of the north of the Ghagra river. But, this again is a controversial point, because the Tharus themselves claim Chittor as their original home and to have descended from Jaimal, Fateh Singh and Tarran Singh of Sisodiya clan of the Rajputs (1303 A.D.). They say that they were driven out apparently in the third siege of Chittor by Akbar in 1567 A.D. and they were originally Rajputs who lost caste by using intoxicating liquor and rearing fowls. They never claim a Gurkha or hill origin. But Nesfield⁴ again contradicts this fable of the Tharus, because they know nothing about this origin and those who pretend to have any claim to the tradition are confused in their statement whether they were driven out of Chittor by Allauddin (1303 A.D.), Bahadur Shah (1533 A.D.) or by Akbar (1567 A.D.). Moreover, no Mohammedan historian has made the slightest allusion to the Tharus in connection with these events and dates. The fiction of having migrated from Rajputana into the Tarai, therefore, must have been invented by some of the clans merely to raise themselves in their own and their neighbours' estimation.

1. W. Crooke, 'The Tribes and Castes of North Western Provinces and Oudh', 1896, Vol. IV, p. 381.
2. Loc. cit., p. 115.
3. Dr. Buchanan, 'Eastern India', Vol. II, p. 341.
4. Loc. cit., p. 33.

According to H. R. Nevill,¹ the Tharus are an aboriginal race who claim royal descent on the female side. He gives a story that 'once upon a time in the remote past when the king of these parts was defeated by the forces of an invader, the women of the royal palace rather than fall into the hands of foe fled into the jungles with the Saies and Chamars belonging to the palace. From these sprang the two indigenous races of the Tharus and Bhukasas, the former is said to have descended from the Chamars and the latter from the Saies'. This tradition is further explained by the dominance of women among the Tharus. Nesfield² is strongly of the opinion that "it is safer to consider the name derived from the dialect of the tribe itself rather than search for it in the Hindi etymology, because an aboriginal name underived from any Sanskrit or neo-Sanskrit source is the fit appellative of an aboriginal, casteless and un-Brahmanised tribe whose customs have been only slightly modified by contact with those of Aryan invader".

Racial Affinities of the Tharus

From the evidence available it can be safely inferred that the Tharus are a mixed tribe. But the authors differ in their opinion as regards this admixture. Four of them, Risley,³ Knowles⁴, Crooke⁵ and Nesfield⁶ agree among themselves at least in one fundamental analysis of the physical features of the Tharus that they have developed Mongolian physiognomy through their marriage alliance with Nepalese and other hill tribes, evidently found in their slanting eyes and high cheek bones. But the latter two authors, Crooke and Nesfield, differ on two points, namely :—

- (i) Crooke traces the non-Mongoloid features of the Tharus to their Dravidian origin.

1. H. R. Nevill, *Loc. cit.*, p. 107.
2. *Loc. cit.*, p. 116.
3. H. R. Risley, 'The Tribes and Castes of Bengal', Vol. II. p. 313.
4. *Loc. cit.*, p. 210.
5. W. Crooke, *Loc. cit.*, p. 385.
6. *Loc. cit.*, p. 37.

- (ii) Nesfield, on the other hand, holds that the Tharus distinctly resemble the Indians in other physical features, namely, in stature, build and gait, because they have 'long, wavy hair, almost dark black complexion and as much hair on the face and body as is usual with other natives of India'.

All these studies were based on observations rather than anthropometric or blood group evidence. Dr. Majumdar, for the first time, carried out an anthropometric and blood group survey among the Tharus which form the subject of a report¹ by Mahalanobis, Majumdar and Rao. They set at rest all these controversies regarding the racial affinities and race mixture among the Tharus. They have found the Tharus definitely a Mongoloid tribe and they could not be placed in any other constellation of tribes and castes of the Province, Indo-Aryan or Australoid. In features they possess, more or less, oblique eyes, mostly brown or yellow-brown complexion, very scanty and straight hair on the body and the face, thin nose of medium size; while in other features they resemble Nepalese more than any of the Australoid or pre-Dravidian castes and tribes. Furthermore, Majumdar² has contested the supposed Rajput origin of the Tharus on the basis of blood group tests carried by him in connection with the Census Operations of the United Provinces, 1941 as given below :—

TABLE II.

Table Showing the Blood Group of the Tharus.

	Number	O	A	B	AB	B+AB
Tharu Males and Females ...	241	27.1	17.0	37.5	18.4	55.9
Tharu Females	82	26.6	13.4	42.7	18.3	61.0

Sankhya—The Indian Journal of Statistics, 1949, Vol. IX, parts 2 and 3, p. 196.

D. N. Majumdar, 'The Tharus and Their Blood Group'—Journal of Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1942, Vol. VIII, No. I, p. 33.

The theory of Rajput origin of the Tharus could not be explained on the basis of serology. The Chamars do not possess a Mongolian cast of face and Rajputs do not have epicanthic folds in their eyes, though the Tharus have both.¹

Thus we are in a position to conclude on the basis of the above evidence that the Tharus are a Mongoloid people, or predominantly so, who have successfully assimilated non-Mongoloid physical features as well.

1. Majumdar, Ibid.

III

THE MATERIAL CULTURE OF THE THARUS

The Tharus had to put up a bold and strenuous struggle for existence in the Tarai region. They have been more or less successful in their efforts to exploit the natural resources to meet their primary needs like food, shelter and clothing. But at the same time, due to their increasing contact with the people of higher material culture their wants are multiplying and a gradual change is perceptible all round in their mode of living. When two or more social groups having diverse traits of culture come into contact with one another, the one possessing a higher material culture exerts a dominant influence on the other which is crudely equipped. The more useful, efficient and durable patterns of tools and implements gradually push out their cruder counter-parts. Their adoption does usually but not necessarily bring about a sudden or violent reaction in the society. We shall see that the Tharus are no exception in this respect. The material aspects of life receive the first blow from the impact. Thus the elements of material culture of the higher civilization were the first things to be borrowed by the Tharus. New beliefs, customs and ideas could only follow gradually.

Tharu Villages.

Tharu villages are generally scattered and are often located at a distance of two to three miles from one another. The Tharus are always in search of a good site for founding their



Plate No. 1. A general view of a Tharu Village.

villages¹. A good site in their judgment must be the land on a high level with proximity to a river or some water supply yet safe from water-logging and inundation during the rainy season. It must have a fertile soil and safety from the constant attacks of wild animals, epidemics and the agencies of evil spirits. If they discover any one of these conditions lacking after settling in a village, they are apt to desert it as has happened in the case of Tisaur Tharu village in Sitarganj Tahsil. It has been shifted as many as four times from its original site due to the inundation of land in course of five years. Chauncela village has been shifted and split up into two villages, Deodhar and Kunsara because of the availability of still better fertile soil. A few villages have changed their sites because of the chance of growing more than one seasonal crop and better *Kharif* or *Rabi* crops. Such was the case of a village now settled in Sainjani. A number of villages in Sitarganj and Khatina Tahsils were deserted due to the menace of wild elephants, though the soil was fertile. Certain villages have been shifted wholly or partly because of cholera epidemic which reduced the population to such a small number that it was better for the people to start a new and healthy village as in the case of Chamarpura, where some families left the village and settled elsewhere. The entire population of Sunkheri village obsessed by the superstition that evil spirits were molesting and killing their children, shifted itself to another site only at a distance of half a mile. In spite of what has been discussed above the underlying cause for the constant shifting of village population which has taken place in the past has been more or less economic. Now this practice is on the decline, though an occasional desertion of a few families of a village still takes place even today, if the *Padhan*, the headman of the village, exercises his high-handedness over them, for the Tharus love freedom and resent restraint of any kind. Diwan Singh of Bharauni left his village with his family

1. Among the Tharus of Gonda District Knowles found a similar situation. S. Knowles, *Loc. Cit.*, P. 211.

for the same reason and settled down in Sainjani and has become the *Padhan* of his village.

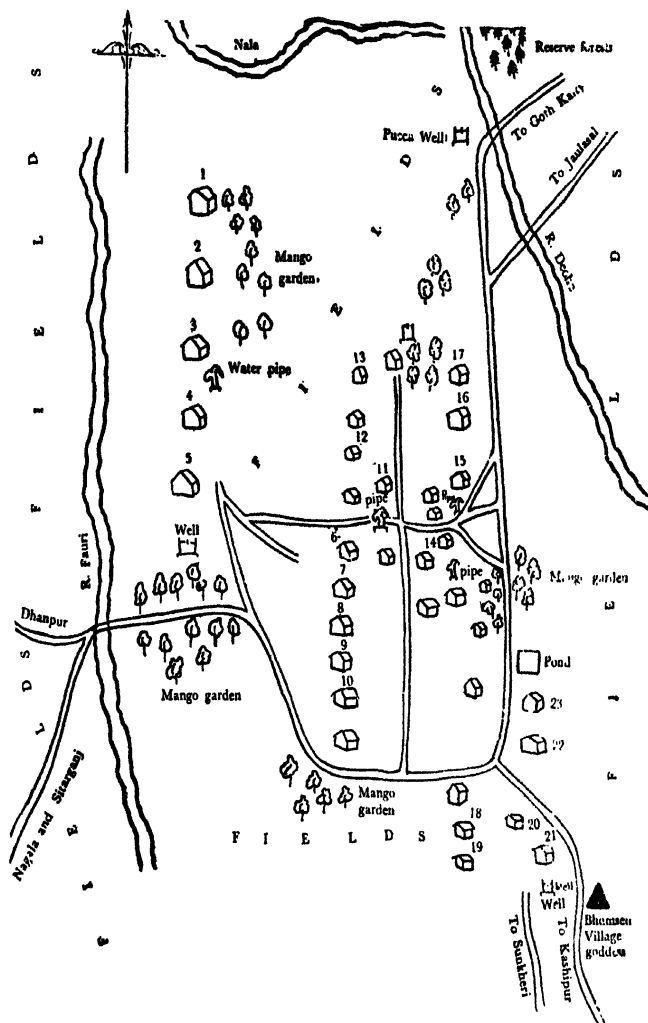
At the time of deserting a village, the Tharus remove only their household goods to their new settlements and leave behind their houses to the mercy of the elements, or to become the haunts of evil spirits.

The practice of deserting the villages and shifting the field cultivation off and on has brought to the Tharus additional responsibilities and labour, also insecurity and instability of life. This has definitely retarded the material prosperity of the Tharus and today we find a growing tendency for building permanent settlements, which have materially benefitted them in leading a more settled and regulated life.

Once a village is settled, its boundary is usually marked by pillars or posts made of stones. The village does not have a separate house for gods and goddesses except a *than* (a place of worship) for Bhumsen, the village deity at the outskirts of the village. There are no bachelor's dormitories or community houses, menstruation huts, guest houses and special granaries for common use and distribution.

In a Tharu village fields separate one house from another. It is clearly shown in the map of Barkidandi village. Before a Tharu settles down in a village and builds his house, he tries to grab as much land as possible for a vegetable garden (*bari*) and also for a small field around his house. He grows seasonal vegetables in his *bari*, and maize, mustard, tobacco, potatoes and onions in his fields, for his personal consumption. Since the fields are very close to his house, he throws his house refuse into them or heaps it near his cattle-shed. He has no idea of keeping a manure pit and this is responsible for breeding flies, mosquitoes and other germs and making the air impure and unhealthy. A good lot of manure is also lost, because it is washed away during the rains.

A narrow and unmetalled lane runs through a village. On either side of the lane the houses are arranged in a line on a higher level. In the past the villages had *Kachcha* wells but now a majority of them possess *pucca* wells, which have been constructed by the administrative department of the Tarai



Map of Barkidandi Village

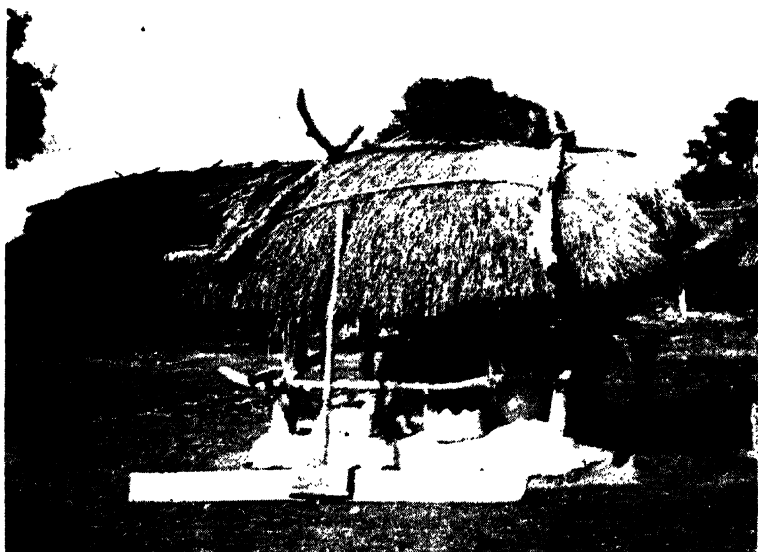


Plate No. 2. A small hut for keeping certain belongings

Estate within its village uplift and general amelioration scheme. As a rule, they are installed near the Padhan's house, since he is the most important person of the village.

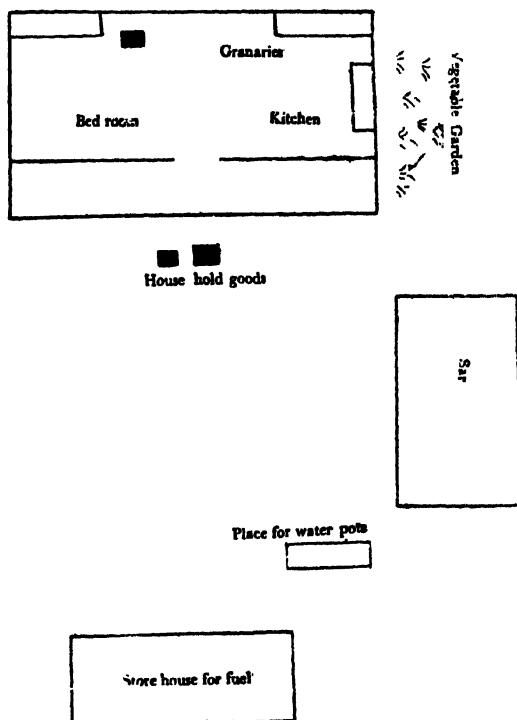
Even a casual visitor to a Tharu village is impressed by the neat arrangement of the houses, their cleanliness in contrast with the congestion of other villages in our State. Again, in a Tharu village community life presents a unique picture. Here a person is related to others by more than one kinship ties resulting from the blood and marriage relationship. This multiple relationship has not only wedded the villagers together in social and ceremonial life but it has also stabilised the village society. A Tharu village, therefore, represents a closely knit society the units of which have developed a bond of fellowship and corporate life through mutual obligations and co-partnership.

Tharu Houses

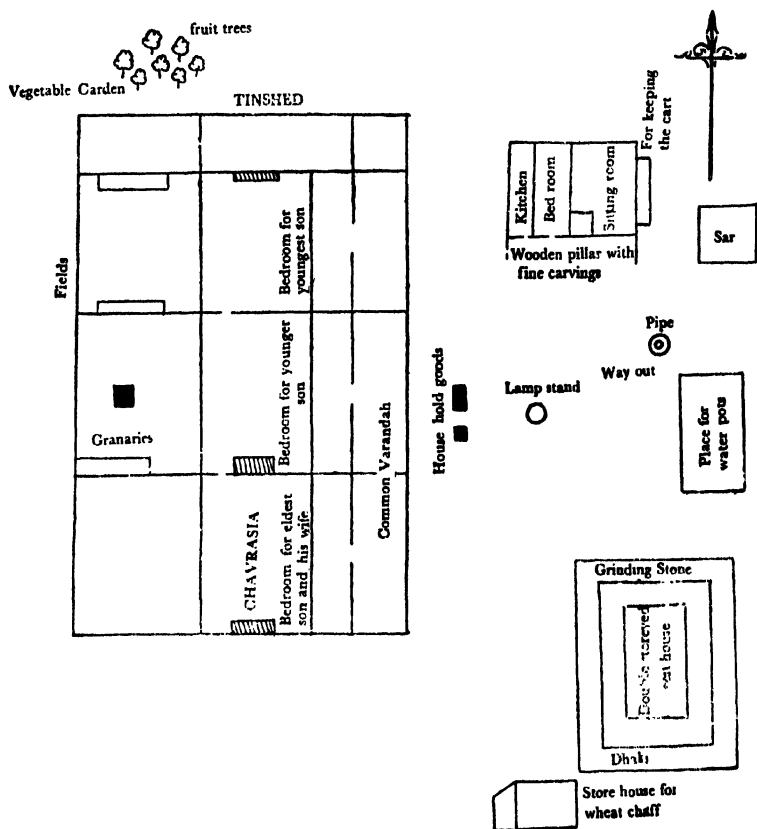
As there is no scarcity of land in the Tarai, the habitat of the Tharus, their houses occupy more area than is normally possible in the plains. Each house with its field and a vegetable garden is a detached residence with a narrow or a broad alley separating it from the adjacent houses. The Tharus generally construct their houses in the months of April and May before the rains set in. On this occasion a *Bharara* is consulted to find a suitable site for building a house. After the site has been selected the *Bharara* offers *hom* (offering *ghce*, jaggery and sandal-wood powder on the fire) to the gods and goddesses to remove the pollution of the place and drive out the evil spirits, if they happen to have their haunt there. At the same time after consulting his deities, the *Bharara* fixes the day for laying the foundation so that the house, built on an auspicious day, may be assured of its durability against all kinds of weather and casualties. The house must face the east to bring them prosperity, which the other directions of the house do not promise. The size of the house depends upon the size of the family. The larger the family, the bigger the house with greater number of *paies*, that is, the partitions. Every house must consist of at least two partitions.

The house is constructed around a central pillar known as *churi* which must be fixed at a depth of three feet in the ground and is 15 to 20 feet in height above the ground. In the same line three or four pillars of equal height are also fixed at an equal distance of 6 to 8 feet. All these pillars determine the length of the house and their number depends upon how many partitions are required in the house for a particular family. Two such pillars can make only one partition. For the breadth, the pillars known as *chara*, *chhota chara*, *aghita* and *tarawaha* or *thuniya* are fixed in the ground one in front of the other and each one is two feet less in height than the one behind it, so that the roof has a regular slope to allow the rain water to flow down. All these pillars have forked ends to support horizontally the beams on which rests a bamboo frame-work for the roof. It is tied to the pillars with ropes to prevent it from being blown away by a strong wind. The roof is thatched with *bharai* or *kans* grass which grow in abundance in the Tarai. The roof is invariably thick, as much as 12 inches to prevent leakage during the rains. The walls are built of *bhajari*, *tant*, or *khariya* grass and are tied to the pillars with durable ropes. The plastering of the walls on both sides and decorations on them are done by womenfolk. The home-made plaster for the walls is made of clay, cow-dung, water and chaff of wheat. We find figures of men riding on a horse and of animals, specially elephants on these walls. The better houses as a rule, have wooden doors with some rectangular designs carved on them. The houses of two *paies* have only one door which is invariably made of split bamboo frame-work.

A house of two *paies* has four rooms. Each *paie* consists of two rooms without a wall separating them. Big earthen granaries known as *kuthala* and *kuthia* serve as walls demarcating the partitions in the house into rooms. The inner room of the house is utilised for cooking meals and for installing household gods (Plan no. 1). No stranger may ever enter this portion of the house. The outer parts are used for sleeping purposes. Each couple in the family is allotted one room. In the back portion of the outer room son and daughter-in-law may sleep. One of the portions of the outer



A plan of Bambal's House in Rampura village
 (An Average Tharu House)
 Plan No. I



A plan of Dhum Singh's House in Barkidandi village
Plan No. II

room is kept for eating their meals. The main house which has its roof projecting on both sides for 5 to 6 feet allows enough space for keeping the rice-husking machine and grinding stone. The fishing nets, empty pitchers, other small agricultural tools and implements hang from these projected roofs. In addition to this, every house has a verandah which opens out on a large courtyard. Here small raised platforms are built for the household deities, such as, *Thakur*, *Durga*, *Nagrahi* (Plan 2). In one corner of the courtyard one finds a bundle of maize suspended from a bamboo for the next sowing season. Outside the house on either side there is usually a miniature orchard containing orange and lemon trees; and also a vegetable-garden. Quite close to this garden the Tharus keep a wooden stand for placing their water pots. Every house has a *sar*, the cattle-shed at a distance of a few yards only from the main house. There may be a number of *sars* (Plan No. 3) according to different species of cattle and their number. Adjacent to the *sar* there are store-houses for *bhusa* (wheat chaff) and fuel.

On one side of the main house the well-to-do Tharus build a *bangala*, the rest house (Plan No. 3). It is built in the same style as the main house with the difference that it is closed on three sides and the front portion opens in the courtyard. Sometimes there are two or three partitions in the *bangala*, which are used for sleeping purposes and for keeping some of their belongings.

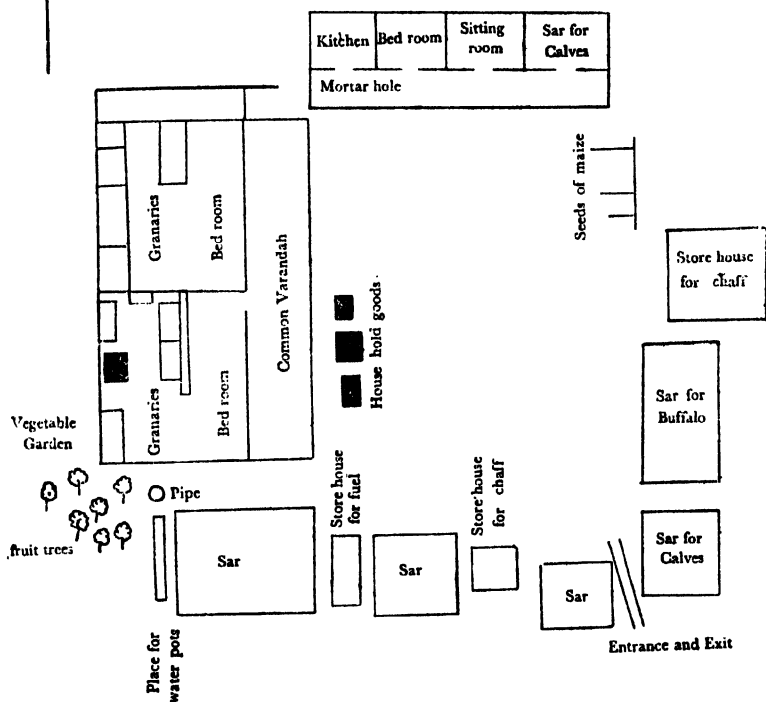
After four or five years the Tharus have to rethatch their houses, *bangala* and *sar*, though much of the old material is utilised in the new structure. Before the rainy season begins, they make minor repairs in their houses every year. They have now begun to replace their thatched roofs with *khap-arahels* (baked earthen tiles), or tin-sheds. Due to their contact with people of better standards of living they are also developing a taste for artistic carvings which decorate the doors and pillars of their houses.

Tables III and IV give us an approximate idea of the various types of the houses constructed in 16 villages of Khati-ma Tahsil and 17 villages of Sitarganj Tahsil.

TABLE III

*Table Showing Various Types of Houses in Khatima
Tahsil*

Sl. No.	Name of the village	Ordinary huts.	Khapar- chals.	Tin sheds.	Pucca- houses.	Total.
1.	Kheta Sanda Kham	24	6	...	...	30
2.	Amau	24	2	...	...	26
3.	Maholiya Bhur	24	3	...	...	27
4.	Sujiya	46	2	...	...	48
5.	Kanjabagh	22	1	..	...	23
6.	Bigrabagh	56	2	...	...	58
7.	Kotra	46	1	...	...	47
8.	Alabirdi	25	...	...	...	25
9.	Chhinaki	14	...	...	...	14
10.	Naugamanath Bisaunta	22	1	...	...	23
11.	Umaru Khurd	16	...	...	...	16
12.	Umaru Kalan	27	...	...	..	27
13.	Kuakhera	23	2	1	1	27
14.	Pehaniya	56	3	...	..	59
15.	Banusi	43	1	...	...	44
16.	Sariya Sara	23	...	...	...	23
Grand Total—		491	24	1	1	517
Percentage —		94.98	4.64	.19	.19	100



A plan of Ram Charan's House in Barkidandi village
Plan No. III

TABLE IV

*Table Showing Various Types of Houses in Sitarganj
Tahsil*

Sl. No.	Name of the village	Ordinary huts.	Khaparchals.	Tin sheds.	Pucca Houses	Total.
1.	Nagara	18	2	1	...	21
2.	Sunkheri	18	1	2	...	21
3.	Sidda Nabadiya	26	1	1	1	29
4.	Dohara	15	...	...	...	15
5.	Pattikhera	18	1	...	...	19
6.	Baghaura	13	2	...	...	15
7.	Tharu Tisaur	12	...	...	...	12
8.	Bawanpuri	23	2	1	...	26
9.	Nakuliya	19	2	1	...	22
10.	Chamarpura	20	...	2	...	22
11.	Paseni	12	...	...	...	12
12.	Berkhera	29	2	...	...	31
13.	Bichawa	14	2	...	...	16
14.	Harriya	6	...	...	...	6
15.	Dhanpur	26	...	...	...	26
16.	Barkidandi	24	1	1	...	26
17.	Tapera	15	...	...	...	15
Grand Total —		308	16	9	1	334
Percentage —		92.23	4.79	2.69	.29	100

The above tables indicate in a general way the tendency towards replacing of thatched houses by *khaparchals*, tin-sheds and building of *pucca* houses. The reasons for this are :—

- (i) The Tharus have learnt to fight the damage caused by frequent fires to their thatched houses by having *khaparchals* and tin-sheds for roofing. The fire not only destroys one or two houses but spreads quickly to the adjacent houses and sometimes reduces the whole village into ashes.
- (ii) The rise in the income level of the Tharu cultivators, who are gaining a better knowledge of marketing for selling their produce at a higher rate, is enabling them to meet the cost of building better houses.

Thus we find that at present only prosperous Tharus have begun to build *pucca* houses but these are few and far between as yet. Thus far, in Khatima Tahsil Karn Singh of Kuakhhera, a rich cultivator and a shop-keeper, in Sitarganj Tahsil, Shyam Lal of Sidda-Nabadiya, a *Mustajar* of several villages have put up *pucca* buildings for their residence. A few Tharus have only changed their thatched roofs for tin-sheds. Only 0·19% of the houses in Khatima and Sitarganj Tahsils have tin-sheds. *Khaparchal* sheds are more popular than both of the above types. In both the Tahsils of Khatima and Sitarganj *Khaparchal* sheds are about 4·64% and 4·79% respectively. Even today, no less than 94·98% and 92·23% of the houses in Khatima and Sitarganj Tahsils have still got their old structure of thatched roofs. The reason for the low percentage of *pucca* houses, tin-sheds, and *khaparchals*, as is evident from our survey, is to be found in their fear of attacks from wild elephants specially in those villages which border the forest areas. That is why even well-to-do residents of Alabirdi, Chhinaki, Umaru Khurd, Umaru Kalan and Sariya Sara in Khatima Tahsil; and Paseni, Harriya and Dhanpur in Sitarganj Tahsil are still clinging to their old type of houses. In those parts of the country where the Tharus are free from such dangers and have come in contact with more civilised people through their education, some of the prosperous people have not only replaced their thatched houses with brick walls and tin-sheds but they have also changed the style and architecture of their houses. An instance of this type is found in Dhum Singh's house (Plan No. 3). He has a bigger house with elaborate carvings on the doors and pillars, colourful designs and paintings on the walls. He has two well-furnished guest houses, one of which is a double-storeyed building where one can enjoy very comfortably one's midday siesta during the summer or rainy seasons. He keeps a lamp on a wooden post which scatters its diffuse light over the whole courtyard and burns incessantly on festivals and ceremonies.

A Tharu will tell you that he builds his house himself; but it is not so. He may measure the ground, bring such material as grass, bamboo and beams from the forest him-

Kuthia

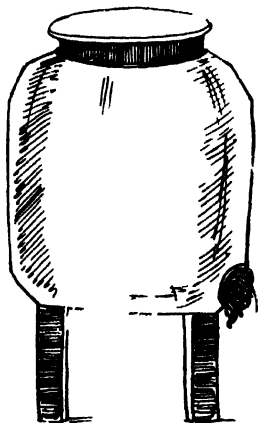


Fig 1

Kuthala

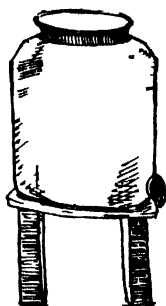


Fig 2

Chulha



Fig 3

Barosi



Fig 4

Topa

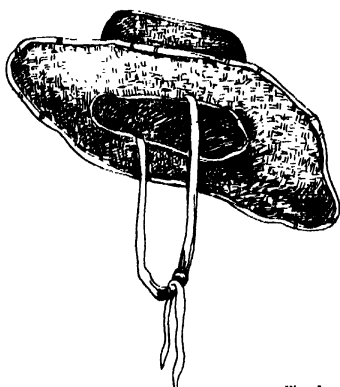


Fig. 5

Tokara

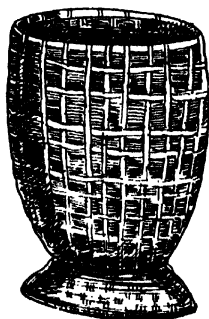


Fig. 6

Chhaparya

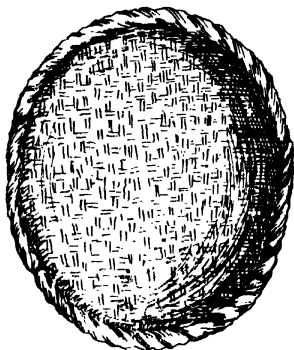


Fig. 7

Supa

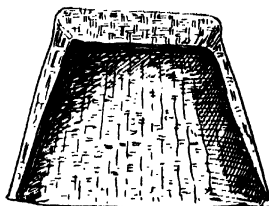


Fig. 8

self, but it takes the labour of several men to construct a house. The owner of the house entertains the helpers with food and drinks according to his means. The more important fact is that the man who invites the labour of his neighbours must help them in return whenever they need his labour.

Both the exterior and interior of the Tharu houses present a neat and tidy appearance.¹ They are swept twice or thrice a day and the ashes and house-refuse are thrown near the cattle-shed or in the fields adjacent to their houses. A defect in their houses seems to be that there is no outlet for the kitchen smoke to escape. The result is that it filters slowly through the roof so that its rafters and articles suspended from it are always thickly coated with black soot and cobwebs.

Household Possessions

Formerly, the Tharus possessed only a few household goods and did not have much difficulty in shifting from one place to another, but now a gradual change in the nomadic character in their life and regular infiltrations of traders in their region from the neighbouring parts of the country are responsible for the rapid increase in their household possessions. However, the Tharus do not entirely depend upon the supply of all their requirements from the outsiders as they themselves can manufacture a number of articles owned by them. The description given below shows the Tharus' capacity for owning household goods. It does not, however, mean that all these articles which are enumerated here are possessed by every one of them. But a Tharu of ordinary means tries to acquire many articles of use through his and his family's savings so as to avoid all the difficulties in his daily and seasonal activities relating to his socio-economic life.

Household Goods and Furniture

Every family makes earthen pots, large and small, for storing grain. They are differently named according to

1. A similar observation has also been made by other ethnographers, Knowles, Buchanan, Nesfield and Majumdar.

their size and capacity, for example, *kuthia*, *kuthala* and *bakhari* made from *kasari*, *bharai* or *sentha* grass*. These granaries are placed on *goras* (earthen stools) of two stools one or two feet high above the ground so that the grain stored in them is protected from dampness and white ants. They have got an opening at the bottom, which is clogged by a cloth, so the women can open it whenever they need the grain for pounding or grinding. The Tharus keep their small belongings on top of these granaries. They have a kind of earthen safe known as *chaurasiya* to keep their money and ornaments under lock and key. They make a basket, of cane to keep their clothes but now the rich Tharus have begun to purchase big wooden boxes and steel trunks for this purpose. They also possess their rice-husking machine, grinding stone and a *barosi* (an earthen pot) to keep fire going on for 24 hours for their smoking purpose. A *hukka* (hubble-bubble),¹ is a favourite possession with the Tharus and it is purchased by them from the local market. They make their own cots, baskets, fans and mats. A cart is indispensable manufacture of their own and sometimes well-to-do Tharus own a number of them.

Fishing Implements and Hunting Weapons

Since the Tharus go in for fishing and hunting almost all the year round and all their equipments are made by themselves, they have different kinds of fishing nets and traps and hunting weapons.

Fishing Nets and Traps of the Tharus

- | | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|
| (1) <i>Jhapiya</i> | (2) <i>Pakhaiya</i> | (3) <i>Thathi</i> |
| (4) <i>Jariya</i> | (5) <i>Jal</i> | (6) <i>Dhimari</i> |
| (7) <i>Gadari</i> | (8) <i>Bhank</i> | (9) <i>Supa</i> |
| (10) <i>Khong</i> | (11) <i>Uphar</i> | (12) <i>Lauka and Gadari</i> |

Every family need not own all the above fishing implements, provided every household has its own nets or traps for the family.

*Refer to Plates No. I

1 Refer to Plate No. IV.

Hal

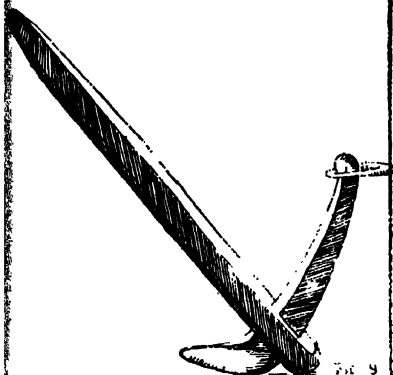


Fig. 9

Juwa

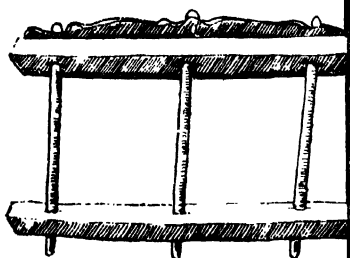


Fig. 10

Patala



Fig. 11

Kilwai

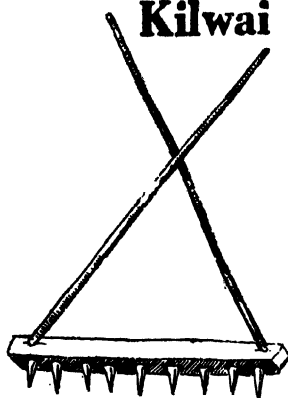


Fig. 12

Kajrauta



Fig. 13

Dit



Fig. 14

Hukka

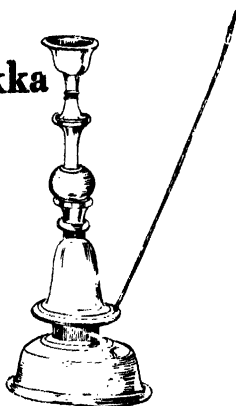


Fig. 15

Chakki

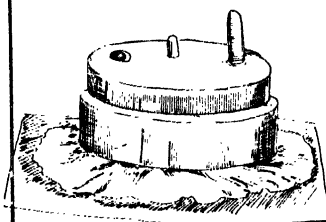


Fig. 16

Plate No. IV, Other Important Possessions.

Hunting weapons include :

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| (1) Gun | (2) <i>Kudhaka</i> |
| (3) <i>Khabar</i> | (4) <i>Gola</i> . |

Within the last two generations the crude weapons, such as, *kudhaka* and *khabar* have been less in use and the gun is replacing them.

Agricultural Implements and Iron Tools

The agricultural implements¹ of the Tharus are:

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| (1) <i>Hal</i> | (2) <i>Kilwai</i> |
| (3) <i>Patala</i> | (4) <i>Juwa</i> |
| (5) <i>Supa</i> | (6) <i>Chhapariya</i> . |

In addition to the above list, they also possess a *takhari* (balance), *paseri* (iron weight of 4 seers) and a *dhari* (stone weight of 2 seers) for weighing their agricultural produce.

In order to manufacture the above agricultural implements and other articles of furniture they purchase from the blacksmiths of Kashipur and Pilibhit the following iron tools with which they carry on their work of carpentry and blacksmithy :—

- | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| (1) <i>Sirasi</i> | (2) <i>Hathaura</i> | (3) <i>Basula</i> |
| (4) <i>Rukhani</i> | (5) <i>Barama</i> | (6) <i>Sunni</i> |
| (7) <i>Biri</i> | (8) <i>Loh katani</i> | (9) <i>Ari</i> |
| (10) <i>Ara</i> | (11) <i>Phara</i> | (12) <i>Kudhari</i> |
| (13) <i>Gadahela</i> | (14) <i>Hansiya</i> | |

Utensils and Vessels

The Tharus attach a great importance to possessing a complete set of cooking utensils which they buy from the markets at Haldwani or Pilibhit. Every family possesses a number of brass or *phul* utensils. The earthen pitchers are being replaced with those of metal ones. Their metal utensils are as follows :—

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| (1) <i>Batuwa</i> | (2) <i>Batuwi</i> |
| (3) <i>Chamcha</i> | (4) <i>Karchhuli</i> |
| (5) <i>Tawa</i> | (6) <i>Kadhai</i> |

¹ Refer to Plate No. III.

(7) *Thali*(8) *Lota*(9) *Gilas*(10) *Gagara*

Only a few Tharus own large vessels, such as, *taula* and *kadhaw* for feeding large parties during some ceremonies; and *kadha*, *jhanjhiva*, *charawa* and *puniya* for preparing sweets. Some of the educated Tharus own even a tea-set.

Musical Instruments.¹

The Tharu males who are talented in music and dancing usually own these musical instruments, such as, *mirdang* (drum) *dhol* (a kind of drum), *jhanjh* (cymbals). Women have *dholak* (a small drum) exclusively for their own use. More advanced among them have discarded their homemade tribal instruments of music and have adopted modern instruments, such as, harmonium and *tabla*.

Some of the Tharus have recently added to their household belongings bicycles, hurricane lanterns, cosmetics and soaps etc.

Dress and Ornaments.

A few decades back the Tharu men and boys hardly wore any clothes except a big *langola* (a piece of cloth about 24 in. long and 6 inches wide) by which they covered the portion from the waist downwards and tied it in a knot at the back. The women wore more clothes and still more ornaments. After becoming more intimate with the civilized people they have adopted the Hindu costumes, though in the interior villages the old fashion is still followed.

Dress.

The present dress of a Tharu male consists of a piece of loin cloth 4 to 6 yards long and one yard wide by which he covers his body from waist down to the knees, while a *phatuki*² covers the chest and the back. A poor Tharu, who cannot afford to procure so many clothes, simply wears

Refer to Plate No. V

A kind of Waist Coat.

Jhanjh

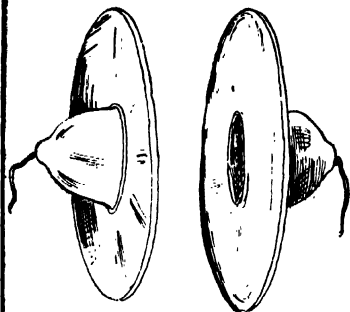


Fig. 17

Dhol

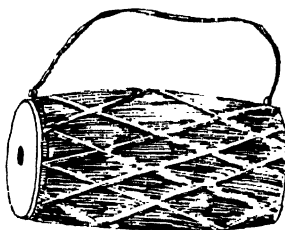


Fig. 18

Mradang

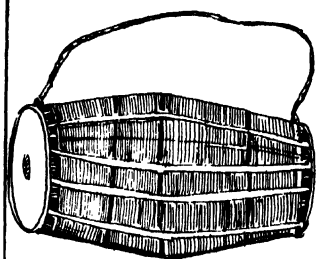


Fig. 19

Dholak

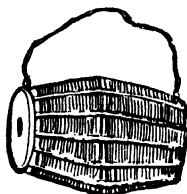
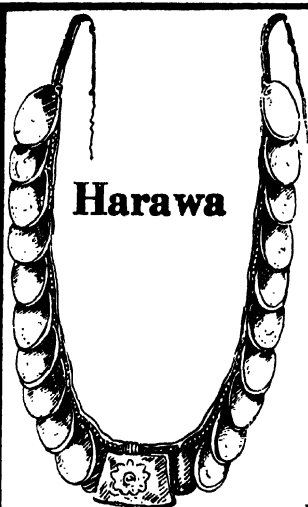
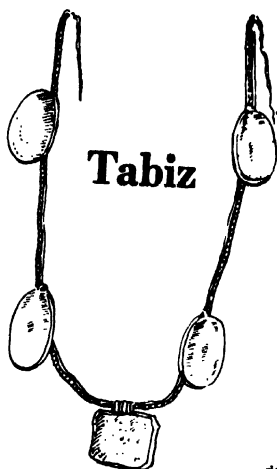


Fig. 20



Harawa

Fig. 21



Tabiz

Fig. 22



Fig. 23

Jhumaka



Fig. 24

Hansuli

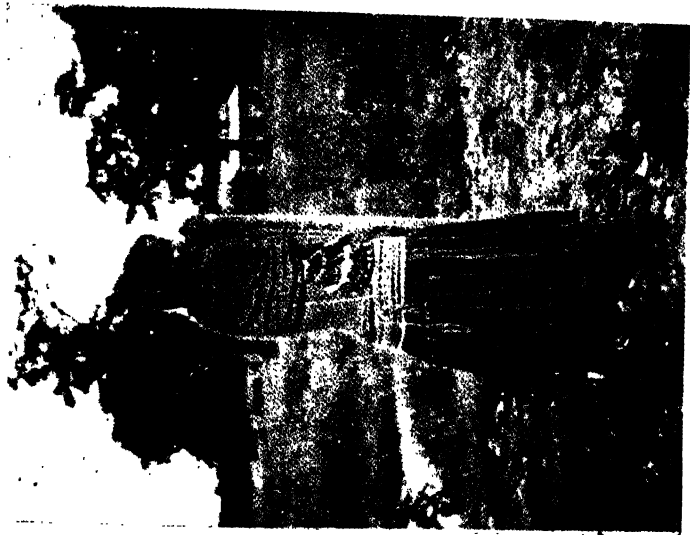


Plate No. 3. Embroidery work on the
Skirts of Woman.



Plate No. 4. Hair Style of a Tharu Woman.

a *langota* which is invariably worn by every Tharu when he is doing rough work. But shirts, *dhoti*, *waskat* (waist coat) are becoming the fashion among the well-to-do Tharus. They dress themselves with their best clothes when they go out for marketing or to a fair. As a rule, they never go out bareheaded and always use a cap. For a change they also wear turbans and hats made of straw. Most of them carry a black blanket over their shoulder as a custom. Some of the educated Tharus have taken to European dress.

The majority of the Tharus go bare-footed, though during the rains they wear *paula* (wooden sandals) to protect their feet from the snake and other injurious crawlers. In other seasons those who can afford put on country made leather shoes made by the *chamars*.

Women wear coloured clothes, the favourite colours being black and dark red. They put on *ghanghariya* (skirt) tied round their waist with a *got* (border) over which different designs like *chukati* and flowers are embroidered by them. The breadth of *ghanghariya* ranges from 7 to 12 yards, reaching their ankles with *fubati* hanging in the front from the waist, which they use only on special occasions and festivals. They cover their head with an *arghona* (a cloth of two and a half yards in length) or *udhaniya* of five yards. They also put on an *angiya* or *choli* (bodice), but in some advanced families the women have given up their tribal dress and have begun to wear *saris* and *dhoties*.

At the time of the Holi, a male Tharu puts on his special dress, that is, his marriage garments, a white *pagari* (turban), *jhagiya* (a kind of loose garment), *sutaniya* (trousers), *alaga* (a piece of cloth worn round the neck), a *pinet* (a belt of cloth round the waist) and a red *patuka* (a long handkerchief) for the dance. Women do not wear any special dancing dress on this occasion. For their national dance a man dresses himself in a woman's garments and ornaments.

Ornaments ¹

Male children wear *duriya* (silver rings) in the ears and

1. Refer to Plates No. VI & VII.

kharuwa (small bracelets) on their wrists, grown-up men have silver *mudariya* (rings) on their small fingers.

Tharu women love ornaments and if they can afford them, they decorate themselves from head to foot with ornaments made of silver. At their marriage they put on a *ghunghat* (veil) with silver embroidery. An ornament known as *bendi* is worn on the forehead on a silver chain and it is attached to the hair. On their nose they wear *nathuni* (nose ring). Other ornaments are many silver ear-rings, such as, *tarpuliya*, *jhumaka*, *bali*, *jhibi* with *duldul* for many holes for which their ears are pierced; the *jhumaka* is specially worn on the lobe of the ears. Round their neck they wear *kathula* of silver coins, *hansuli* and *harawa* of silver rupees hanging down to the breasts and another *sankar* (a chain of silver) coming down to the waist together with necklaces of green, yellow and red coloured beads. They put on finger-rings, *chhalla* and *mudariya* on all their fingers except the middle one. On their wrists they wear *kharuwa* (bracelets), *pariband* (wristlet), bangles, *pahunchi*, *pachheli*, *chhanni*; and on their arms, *josan*. The married women only decorate their toes with *bichhiya* and *anguthi*. On their ankles, women wear thick silver or nickle *bankara* or *painra*. Some fashionable ones among them put on *tikli* on their forehead.

Men and women have their bodies tattooed for further decoration, though men, as a rule, do not take the same interest in it as the women do. There is no restriction for the unmarried boys and girls to have the tattoo marks on their arms. All of them like to have their names tattooed on their arms but women also have floral designs and names of their husbands. Sometimes, the figures of gods, such as, Hanuman and Shiva are tattooed on their bodies. But these tattoo marks are simply looked as ornamental and decorative devices. The Tharus do not attach any other significance to them, such as, totem animals, nor do they represent a form of sympathetic magic to save the wearer from the animals portrayed on the bodies of men and women.

From the above study of the material culture of the Tharus we note that because of the change in their nomadic

Sankar



Fig. 25

Kathula



Fig. 26

Josan

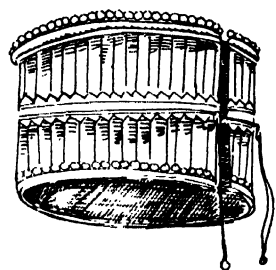


Fig. 27

Bankara

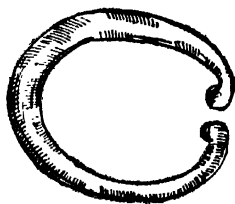


Fig. 28

character to more settled conditions of life and their contact with higher civilization they are definitely adopting and assimilating some alien elements in their material culture.

IV

THARU ECONOMICS

The essential elements in the economic life of the Tharus as described by Nesfield,¹ consisted of hunting, fishing, collecting forest fruits and roots, stock-raising and a crude form of agriculture. A brief account of the economic life of the Tharus is given by D. N. Majumdar² who states that the Tharus live by chase, fishing, agriculture and a few supplementary occupations, such as, basketry and rope-making. According to the latter, agriculture is the main occupation of the Tharus. The distribution of economic activities, and their adjustment to the seasonal variations, the daily routine of life, cooperation of the different members of the family in the economic pursuits, the relative importance of different sources of their livelihood, the magico-religious rites relating to agriculture, trade, exchange and distribution, and above all the mutual obligations, and reciprocity in their transactions all of which constitute the economic organisation of the Tharus, have yet to be properly evaluated and studied in detail in the light of changes that have occurred in the context of contacts with their more civilized neighbours. It is significant that since the Tharus have now lived long enough with the Hindus, they have improved their knowledge of agriculture and are applying better tools and implements in their methods of farming. In fact, they have proved to be more industrious in their

1. Loc. Cit. p. 30

2. D. N. Majumdar, Loc. Cit., pp. 120-127

farming than people of the plains. But the adoption and practice of improved methods of cultivation do not mean that they have abandoned other supplementary sources of their livelihood. Along with agriculture they have allotted sufficient time in their seasonal calendar to the supplementary pursuits of fishing, hunting, gathering of fuel and fruits from the forests and making of net, mat and rope (as given in the Table V).

The Tharus have adjusted admirably with the opportunities and difficulties alike presented by the physical environment of their habitat. Of a special importance is their adoption of agricultural cycles exploiting the seasonal change. The borrowing of the calendar from the neighbouring Hindus has, no doubt, aided the Tharus to obtain precision, but it also brings out in bold relief how they had even grasped the significance of the seasonal variations and the need of adaptation to them by varying their agricultural operations. It is interesting to note how the same type of adaptations have been reached in regard to their central economic activity, namely, agriculture. For instance, during April and May the swamps and rivers go dry making the catch easy. The same opportunities are provided also during the rainy season, when fish become abundant and spill over into the rivers and streams making the catch easy by nets, traps and other devices. At this time of the year when labour is free from agricultural operations, fishing becomes the main occupation of the Tharus. Similarly, hunting and subsidiary occupations like basket-making and house-repairing etc. are also beautifully dovetailed with the agricultural off-seasons and the advantages of the natural seasons.

Sowing and harvesting seasons for *kharif* crops are *Asadh* (June-July) and *Kunwar* (September-October); while those for *rabi* crops are *Kartik* (October-November) and *Phagun* (February-March). During these months when the labour in the fields is in full swing, fishing and hunting become slack. During the respite when the crops have been harvested and there is a lull in the field labour, fishing, hunting, and other

supplementary occupations, such as, constructing and repairing of houses, basketry, pottery, net, mat and rope-making keep the Tharus as active as in their agricultural operations in the months of *Baisakh* (April-May), *Jeth* (May-June), *Pus* (December-January). The following table gives a well-rounded picture of the routine of economic activities distributed over the year :—

TABLE V

Table Showing the Routine of Economic Activities of the Whole Year

<i>Seasons</i>	<i>Months</i>	<i>Seasonal Activities</i>
Hot	<i>Chait</i> (March-April)	Harvesting wheat, gram and <i>kassa</i> (pulse); threshing, winnowing and storing these grains and their chaff. Fishing and hunting very slack.
	<i>Baisakh</i> (April-May)	Fishing and hunting on the increase; repairing and constructing houses. Collecting fuel from the forest; making of nets, mats, baskets, ropes and repairing of tools.
	<i>Jeth</i> (May-June)	Fishing and hunting; repairing and construction of houses and supplementary occupations continued.
	<i>Asadh</i> (June-July)	Field labour brisk for sowing <i>kharif</i> crops, ploughing, clearing wild growth, levelling of fields, sowing of maize, rice, sunn-hemp and vegetables, such as, yam at the break of the monsoon. Fishing in flooded waters.

*Table Showing the Routine of Economic Activities of the
Whole Year*

<i>Seasons</i>	<i>Months</i>	<i>Seasonal Activities</i>
Rainy	<i>Sawan</i> (July-August)	Watching over <i>kharif</i> crops, protecting them from wild animals; weeding of paddy fields. Fishing continues; occasional hunting. Collecting of forest fruits and leaves.
	<i>Bhadaun</i> (August-Sept.)	Harvesting of maize crop; watch-over paddy fields. Fishing and hunting occasional.
Winter	<i>Kunwar</i> (Sept.-Oct.)	Harvesting of paddy, threshing, winnowing and storing of grain. Fishing and hunting very slack.
	<i>Kartik</i> (Oct.-Nov.)	Several ploughings and levellings of fields for <i>rabi</i> crops, sowing wheat, gram, pease, <i>masur</i> and vegetables, such as, potatoes, onions. Harvesting of later crops of paddy, such as, <i>hansraj</i> and <i>bansmati</i> .
	<i>Aghahan</i> (Nov.-Dec.)	Sowing of <i>rabi</i> crops, if delayed. Cutting and storing of wild grass for repairing and constructing thatches.
	<i>Pus</i> (Dec.-Jan.)	More hunting; fetching of fuel from the forest. Watching over <i>rabi</i> crops
	<i>Magh</i> (Jan.-Feb.)	Hunting slacks (weddings.)
	<i>Phagun</i> (Feb.-March)	Harvesting of <i>masur</i> crop. (Holi celebrations).

Daily Routine of Work

The cycle of economic activities chalks out for the Tharus a definite scheme of work for the whole year and also regulates their daily routine of work. Any change in their seasonal calendar of work is reflected in their daily activities. During their sowing and harvesting seasons they are busy on their fields all the day. In those months when the field labour relaxes they employ their time in repairing and constructing houses or engage themselves in other supplementary occupations. They fish all day long and spend nights in hunting. In the month of *Magh* their daily routine of work is interrupted by weddings which must take place during this month. *Holi* is the most important festival and must be observed in *Phagun* with plenty of singing and dancing. Thus they adjust their routine of work and arrange it very well according to the seasonal changes but they are more particular about eating their food regularly in time. The following table shows what proportion of time and labour is devoted to agricultural pursuits in their daily routine of work.

TABLE VI

Table Showing Daily Routine of Work During the Agricultural Operations.

Time	Men's Activities	Women's Activities
5 to 9 A.M.	Rising up and going to their fields.	Rising up later, sweeping and clearing of house, fetching of water from the wells, cooking of morning meal and carrying it for their men in the fields.
9 to 11 A.M.	Taking of morning meal in the fields, puffing of their <i>hukka</i> , resume work in the fields.	Returning and eating their own meal; cleaning of the utensils and tiding the kitchen.

Table Showing Daily Routine of Work During the Agricultural Operations.

Time	Men's Activities	Women's Activities
11 A.M. to 3 P.M.	Still busy in the fields.	Busy with pounding or grinding the grain; making of baskets or pottery.
3 to 5 P.M.	Returning from the fields; letting off the bullocks for grazing.	Cooking of evening meal; cleaning of the house.
6 to 8 P.M.	Bringing cattle home, taking their evening meal. Over their <i>hukka</i> enjoying folk tales and riddles and retiring to bed early.	Taking of evening meals, cleaning of utensils; retiring to bed early like men except when they have their tribal music.

Division of Labour

Some writers have not appreciated the fact that the Tharus have organised their labour according to a definite plan. They have division of labour according to sex, age and class. Each member of the family has his own activities marked out and has to play a distinct role within the limit. The division of labour between the sexes is based upon customs, convention and tradition rather than on strictly psychological or industrial considerations, though children and aged people are mostly employed in various vocations requiring less physical strain. Certain occupations are exclusively assigned to a particular sex, for instance, spading, ploughing, levelling of the fields, hunting, building and repairing of the houses etc. are done by men, while cooking of meals, fetching of water from the well plastering of the walls and making of earthen pots for domestic use are some of the duties allotted to women. At the same time, there are a number of occupations, sowing of the seeds, harvesting, gardening, fishing and poultry farming which are jointly done by them to help each other as the table VII shows:—

TABLE VII

Table Showing Division of Labour Between Sexes

Different Economic Activities	Men	Women	Both
1. Agriculture.	Spading and ploughing of fields, Sowing of seeds, watching over the crops at night and stocking.	Preparing of seeds for sowing, weeding the fields, taking of meals to menfolk in the fields, storing, husking and grinding of the corn.	Carrying the seeds for sowing to the fields and sometimes helping in sowing. Harvesting, bundling the ears of corn. Lo- ading them. Winno- wing. Gardening.
2. Hunting and Fishing.	Hunting	...	Fishing.



Plate No. 5. A Woman fetching water from a well.

Table Showing Division of Labour Between Sexes

Different Economic activities	Men	Women	Both
3. Miscellaneous.	Building of new houses and repairing of old ones. Making of ropes, mats, nets and traps and musical instruments. Carpentry and smithy. Rearing of cattle and grazing of the cattle. Bringing of fuel from the forests. Performance of magical rites and rituals. Labour and service. Boys help the fathers.	Plastering of walls and making of artistic designs and figures on them. Gathering of wild fruits and roots from the forests. Basket making, Pottery. Cooking of food and fetching of water from the wells. Preparing of curd and ghee, stitching their and children's clothes. ... Domestic labour, such as, grinding or pounding of gram. Girls help the mothers.	Milking the buffaloes and cows. Poultry farming.

The table VII gives us an idea of how the work is divided among the different members of the family based on the principles discussed earlier, though it does not exhaust the list.

As custom and tradition play a great part in determining the type of work to be done by the members of the two sex every boy or girl begins to pursue a particular economic career from his or her childhood. The girls are, therefore, taught to take up lighter work of domestic nature, such as, cooking of meals, cleaning of cooking utensils, grinding, and sweeping the courtyard etc. The boys are given training to assist their parents in harvesting, fishing and a number of jobs suited to their physical strength. Old men, on the other hand, keep themselves busy in making or mending various kinds of nets and traps, ropes and mats, in watching the crops at night in fields and in tending the cattle, while old women make baskets and fans and look after small children.

Now on the basis of the seasonal calendar of activities, daily routine of life and division of labour, we are in a position to conclude that agriculture is the pivot of their economic life; while the former pursuits like fishing, hunting and gathering etc. do supplement the main occupation of cultivation. Thus, broadly speaking, the following are the means by which the Tharus at present carry on their economic activities :—

1. Agriculture.
2. Rearing of cattle.
3. Fishing.
4. Hunting.
5. Collecting of forest fruits and roots.
6. Construction and repairing of houses.
7. Carpentry.
8. Smithy.
9. Pottery.
10. Making of fishing nets, traps, mats, ropes and musical instruments.
11. Labour.
12. Government service.



Plate No. 6. Pounding of paddy in dhenki.

Agriculture

The Tharus depend for the greater part of the year on the produce of their fields. It has been estimated that out of 12,800 earners, male and female, no less than 10,717 were returned as cultivators among the Tharus. They are industrious cultivators who have more recently developed a practical knowledge of soil, plants and other environmental conditions. Now they are fully alive to the fact that ploughing, manuring, good seeds and adequate water supply at proper time are some of the factors which are necessary for agricultural production.

There does not appear to be any scarcity of land for cultivation for the Tharus but the population is more concentrated specially in those areas which are more fertile and where there is the least danger of damage to the crops by wild animals. But in spite of big space available, the agricultural holdings of the different Tharu families show a great variation as the following table reveals :—

TABLE VIII

Table Showing the Variation in Agricultural Holdings of Tharu Cultivators in Khatima and Sitarganj Tahsils.

Size of the Agricultural holdings in Bighas.	Total number of Cultivators in 33 villages occupying different sizes of plots of land.			
	Khatima Tahsil		Sitarganj Tahsil	
	No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage
Below 5	44	9.05	28	8.33
5-10	104	21.40	94	28.31
10-15	148	30.46	85	25.52
15-20	82	16.87	48	14.45
20-25	54	11.11	21	6.62
25-30	42	8.64	46	13.75
30-35	12	2.47	10	3.02
Total	486	100	332	100

This discrepancy in the agricultural holdings is due to two factors, namely :—

(1) With the break-up of joint family system, as we shall see in the next chapter, there has been more fragmentation of agricultural holdings resulting into small units. The low

percentage of large holdings 2.47% in Khatima and 3.02% in Sitarganj Tahsils reveals the fact that only large joint families can bring big holdings of land under cultivation; whereas single families cannot control them because of the lack of labour supply from the family itself.

(2) The Tharus do not depend upon any external source of labour supply as it is very scarce. This accounts for the fact that generally, the average Tharu holding is not more than 10 to 15 bighas.

Cultivation of Rice and Other Crops

Like the cultivators of the plains, the Tharus also have two seasons, *kharif* and *rabi* for raising various crops. During the *kharif* they grow rice, maize, sunn-hemp, yam and turmeric, while in *rabi* they usually produce wheat gram, masur and *lahi* (a kind of mustard). The rice, however, is the staple crop of the Tharus. Every cultivator reserves his fields for rice cultivation except a few bighas of land as residual land for other crops, because rice cultivation requires less labour than wheat and grows luxuriantly in the soil of the Tarai.

In May the Tharus begin to plough and level the fields for rice cultivation. Before sowing season they must plough and level the fields at least three to four times. But they never begin the first ploughing on the *Amawasya* day. In Barkidandi village of Sitarganj Tahsil, Ram Charan could not go to his fields to begin ploughing his fields. When he was asked the reason for it, he answered, "We do not resume any new work on a day when the moon has not shone the previous night. If we start the ploughing of the fields on such a day our crops are likely to fail."

After the first showers of rain have fallen the women allow the paddy seeds to soak in water for a day before sowing. Then the men take the seeds to the fields and sow them; sometimes women also assist their menfolk in sowing. First of all, coarse varieties of paddy, such as, *Rajbhog*, *Anjana* and *Karmulli* are sown by them. The majority of the Tharus sow *Rajbhog* for their consumption, as it is an early variety. They also raise finer varieties of paddy, such as, *bansmati*,



Plate No. 7. Grown-up boys assist their parents in ploughing the fields.

hansraj etc. but only a few well-to-do Tharus can afford it. The Tharus rarely purchase seed from outsiders as they try to save enough paddy seed for sowing in the next season and do not need to purchase them from outsiders. If they have not got enough quantity due to the failure of crop or excess in their daily consumption, only then they are obliged to borrow it from their relatives or purchase it from the Government farm at Khatima Tahsil or seed stores opened by the Estate at Sitarganj, Khatima and Nanakmata.

Magico-religious Rites in Agriculture

Since the primary motivation of all the activities of the Tharus, like that of other primitive tribes, is centred round the food-producing pursuits, agriculture being the most important of them, the magico-religious rites and observances are intimately connected with the agricultural operations. The Tharus resort to magical rites which are directed to ward off the insects, protect the crops from the wild animals and augment agricultural produce soon after the sowing. The following methods are employed by the Tharus to guard their crops against the pests and insects.

(a) If after sowing, the seed does not germinate correctly, the danger of failure of crops is foreseen by the Tharus. Then they approach the *Bharara* to protect their crops. He makes a couple of rounds of the field, sprinkling water while reciting some *mantras*. This performance is known as *Bahurara*.

(b) Again, when the plants blossom, the *Bharara*, by his magical powers, endows a quantity of milk with his charm and keeps it at the *Padhan's* residence. All the women of the village distribute the charmed milk among themselves and sprinkle it over three corners of the field leaving the fourth one so that the insects may escape through this way.

(c) Women make a bamboo frame-work and place over it a piece of potsherd with fire in it. They place some *ghee* and jaggery on the fire and fan the rising smoke in the direction of the wind so that it may spread the smoke over the fields. The Tharus believe that by offering *dhanwari* (smoke) to the fields in this manner they will get rid of pests and insects.

A number of devices are employed by the Tharus to drive away the wild animals when the blades begin to have ears of corn.

(a) The most effective device is the *mantra* of an expert *Bharara* who is called to sprinkle the water charmed by his *mantra* over the different corners of the fields so that the animals may not dare to step in the fields. The following *mantra* has been recorded in this connection from Bhaggamal *Bharara* of Naugamanath Bisaunta village who has tried this many a time on his own fields.

Mantra

Guru Gorakhnath, a disciple of Lord Siwa, will protect
our fields.

If the wild-boar, deer and the *chital* step in the fields.
They will be dead.

But such devices are not very commonly used, because very few *Bhararas* know how to execute them.

(b) In majority of villages temporary huts known as *machans* are raised on poles. Here the Tharus watch their fields and protect them from wild animals. But in those villages which border the forests, such devices of watching over the crops are not possible as there is always a danger of attacks of tigers. Only a year ago two residents of Dhanpur village were killed by a tiger, while they were keeping a watch over their fields at night. In such villages they fix a number of scare-crows in their fields to scare the animals away from the fields.

Naya

(The Ceremony of First-Eating of Grain)

When corn begins to ripen in the fields, the Tharus, first of all, offer a few ears of grain to their household gods and goddesses to invoke their blessings before they begin the actual harvest. This *Naya* ceremony is observed on a Monday or Thursday. On that day, men and women bring some grain stalks from the fields and place them in front of gods. They take out the grains from these stalks and grind them

and prepare *puries* and sweets out of them. Once again, they offer this cooked food to the gods to receive their final blessings before harvesting the crops. After that they share the food offered to the gods.

After taking the blessings of the gods the Tharus begin to harvest the paddy fields late in September or in the beginning of October. First of all, the harvesting of coarse varieties of paddy, such as, *rajbhog*, *anjana* etc. begins and that of *bansmati*, *hansraj* and others follow. It is the busiest season for every Tharu family. All men, women and grown-up children rush to the fields with their sickles after taking their morning meal. After harvesting the paddy fields they carry the stalks of grain to their houses. Sometimes, they may store them in the fields to be carted to the house the next day. The threshing is done in the courtyard of the house. The women clean their courtyard first and then plaster it with cowdung. The stalks of grain are spread on it and two or four bullocks attached to a rope are made to go round treading it to thresh it. Men and grown-up boys and sometimes women too take their turn at driving the bullocks. The winnowing is done both by men and women who put the paddy in a winnowing pan holding it above their heads and release the paddy gradually so that the chaff is carried away by the wind. The clear grain accumulates on the ground.

Another crop sown with the first break of the monsoon is the maize. It is grown in the fields which the Tharus have next to their own house. This is harvested much earlier than the rice and threshed under the *Dhenki* (rice-husking machine). The grains of the maize are pulled out by the hands.

Immediately after the *kharif* crop is harvested, the Tharus begin to prepare the fields for sowing the *rabi* crop. Wheat is the main *rabi* crop. The other subsidiary crops for the same season are gram, red gram, *masur*, pease and *lahi*. Wheat and gram are harvested in the months of March and April ; while *masur* and *lahi* are harvested slightly earlier than other crops. Except for the maize, the processes for threshing, winnowing are the same as for *kharif* crops.

The common fruit trees generally grown by the Tharus are mangoes, *jamun*, bananas, lemon, orange, papaya, guavas and pomegranate etc.

Rearing of Cattle

Cattle is of vital importance to the Tharus. Every Tharu cultivator owns a pair of bullocks, if not more. They keep a number of cows but not so much for the supply of milk as for breeding bullocks. The calves are fed on milk to help them grow into strong bullocks. The number of bullocks and other domestic animals owned by a Tharu depends upon the number of bighas of land he owns. There are some Tharus who have more than 100 cattle. For instance, the cattle wealth of Bhaggamal of Naugamanath Bisaunta is cows 125, bullocks 26, female buffaloes 4, male-buffaloes 2 and goats 5. Every year he sells one or two pairs of good calves and makes one hundred to hundred and fifty rupees.

Thus the domestication of cattle helps the Tharus to support their agricultural operations and some times it also serves as a direct source of income when they sell their cattle to others.

The maintenance of cattle is not so very expensive in this region as it is in the plains, because the Tharus have to pay only a nominal sum for grazing charges. But the danger from the wild animals and also from diseases due to the unhealthy climate of their region, which reduce their cattle wealth, is very alarming.

Formerly, they used to raise poultry, but now they are slowly giving up this practice, because of the pressure of Social Reform Committee. This is more applicable to the residents of Khatima Tahsil, because the people of Sitarganj Tahsil are still finding this occupation profitable enough to keep it up. Only the well-to-do Tharus can afford to keep horses for their personal use.

FISHING

Fishing is a favourite pastime and a supplementary occupation with the Tharus, in which men, women and children

Plate No. 8 Fishing in flooded waters by Supa.



take an equal part, though women and children avoid fishing in deep water. The latter only use a small trap *pakhaiya* for catching fish, while menfolk try different kinds of nets and traps in different seasons. The technique of their fishing varies from simple catching by the hand to the more complex and effective methods of catching with big nets and traps. The trapping and catching by hand are frequently done in the rainy season when the rivers and streams are in floods. The Tharus place a small bamboo trap *dhimari* on a sloping platform against the current of small streams. The small fish, coming up with the current, are caught in the mesh of the trap. The *supa* is also used in the same way for catching the fish. During the rains, when the rivers overflow their banks into the adjacent fields, they bring along the fish; and the Tharus place a small trap *udhar* over them and catch them with their hands. But in the summer season when most of the rivers, streams and lakes have only knee deep water the community fishing takes place at this time. People of several villages join together and several parties go out with their carts for an all day fishing. On this occasion men spread their large nets, such as, *jal*, *thathi*, *bhank*, *jariya*, though women and children still use their small nets. It may look like a community affair but after a close observation we find that each individual tries to pool as big a supply for his family as he possibly can. They bring their catch home and dry the fish in the sun for the purpose of storing them. If the catch is in excess of their needs, they distribute it among their relatives and friends.

HUNTING

As the Tharus are great hunters, they, in spite of the forest laws, steal into the forests for their hunt, though they are easily intimidated if they are caught by forest guards or any other touring official of the Forest Department. But they try to evade the fines and punishments by offering them compensation in cash or in kind. They resent the forest laws. Sadhu Ram, an ex-*padhan* of Bawanpuri village, criticises the Government for the restrictions imposed upon their rights of hunting. He says, "The Government

is not helping us in any way. We are not allowed the liberty of hunting, even during two months of our Holi festival. Formerly we were free to hunt at least during the Holi, but now we cannot do even that. In every way we are oppressed and made to suffer." This feeling of resentment against the restrictions upon their free hunting is so strong that it has given rise to recent crimes such as murders. A forest guard has recently been killed in the forest by a party of Tharu hunters.

Hunting is an individual as well as group occupation among the Tharus. It is a common practice among the hunters to form parties for hunting; and they are remarkable in their ability to follow a trail.

Hunting by gun: The Tharus never use bows and arrows for hunting. The most effective of all the weapons used by them is the gun. Formerly, they could not obtain licences for purchasing guns because of their own poverty and Government's reluctance in providing guns to them, but now they are in a position to purchase greater number of guns because of their better income level and also due to the encouragement from the Government, which has been liberal in its issue of the licences to arm the Tharus to check the menace of wild animals.

The following table will give us an idea how many guns have been issued to the Tharus in 33 villages of Khatima and Sitarganj Tahsils.

TABLE IX

Distribution of Guns Among the Tharus

No. of villages in Khatima Tahsil.	No. of guns in each vi- llage.	No. of villages in Sitarganj Tahsil	No. of guns in each vi- llage
1. Kheta Sanda Kham	1	1. Nagara	5
2. Anau	—	2. Sunkhera	8

Distribution of Guns Among the Tharus

No. of villages in Khatima Tahsil.	No. of guns in each vi- llage.	No. of villages in Sitarganj Tahsil	No. of guns in each vi- llage
3. Maholiya Bhur	1	3. Sidda Nabadiya	4
4. Sujiya	1	4. Dohara	1
5. Kanjabagh	2	5. Pattikhera	2
6. Bigrabagh	1	6. Baghaura	5
7. Kotra	6	7. Tharu Tisaur	1
8. Alabirdi	2	8. Bawanpuri	3
9. Chhinaki	1	9. Nakuliya	1
10. Naugamanath Bisauta	6	10. Chamarpura	5
11. Umaru Khurd	—	11. Paseni	1
12. Umaru Kalan	—	12. Berkhera	1
13. Kuakhera	4	13. Bichawa	3
14. Pehaniya	4	14. Harriya	—
15. Banusi	—	15. Dhanpur	3
16. Sariya Sara	—	16. Barkidandi	2
		17. Tapera	—
Total	29		45

One interesting point to note from the table is that in Khatima Tahsil the inhabitants of five villages out of 16 do not possess any gun at all, while in Sitarganj Tahsil only two villages out of 17 namely, Harriya and Tapera do not have guns. The reason for greater number of guns in Sitarganj Tahsil is that there are more frequent attacks of wild animals here than in Khatima Tahsil. Moreover, some of the well-to do Tharus in Sitarganj Tahsil own as many as two guns.

The fact that the number of guns among them is increasing is a clear indication that hunting is also on the increase, though, as a rule, illegally. Some of the Tharus have excelled themselves as hunters and have earned the reputation as *shikaries* (the great hunters). Ganga Ram of Sunkheri is one of them and is called upon even by the Government officials who seek his assistance when they come for hunting during the winter season.

Generally, a party of hunters steal into the forest with their carts either late in the evening or early in the morning

before the dawn, as the animals are sighted mostly during these hours. They believe that if they miss the first shot, they may not get any game during that trip but they never lose their patience and follow the hunt next day. Shyam Lal, the *Mustajar* of Sidda Nabadiya, failed to get at his game in the forest for three days continuously but he did not lose courage. On the fourth day he shot two spotted deer and felt amply compensated for his three days' disappointment.

When the party returns after hunting an animal from the forest, the animal is skinned and the flesh is cut into pieces. The skin, head, heart and legs go to special persons according to the contribution of a game and the rest is divided into a number of shares to be distributed in the following manner:—

- (i) The man who shoots the animal receives its head and liver in addition to the share of meat.
- (ii) The man bearing the cost of cartridges gets the skin, horns and the share of meat.
- (iii) The owner of the gun only gets an ordinary share of meat.
- (iv) The owner of the torch receives his share.
- (v) Those who help the party with their carts get meat and intestines.
- (vi) The *Padhan* is entitled to receive one hind leg of every animal brought by the hunters.

This is a conventional form of distribution after every hunt. There is no indication of any quarrel ever arising over the shares.

Other Methods of Hunting

(a) **Kutyahi:** The Tharus also go out for hunting with a batch of dogs which are specially trained to chase deer and catch them by their leg. This is known as *kutyahi*, which is not very popular these days. In this case, the owner of the dog gets head, heart and the skin, whereas other men cooperating in the hunt usually receive an equal share of the meat. The *Padhan* also gets his share of the leg.

(b) **Khabar or Babar:** The method used for trapping animal is a *khabar*, a large net made of ropes. This is placed on the track of animals and the hunters sit at a distance with a string of the net in their hands. As soon as the animal comes near the net the string is pulled and the animal is caught in the net. They beat the animal to death with their sticks. The meat is distributed in its usual conventional manner, but if they catch a wild boar, the owner of the net gets its skin which is supposed to be a very delicious part of its body.

(c) **Khudhaka:** It is a kind of wooden trap which is fixed at a place frequented by animals. As soon as an animal happens to pass over it one of its legs is entangled in it. Consequently, it cannot run away very far and finally falls down. Then people follow the track of the trapped animal and bring it back home.

(d) **Udara:** The Tharus dig a deep hole in the fields adjacent to the forest and cover it with some grass and leaves. Hares and peacocks are entangled in the hole and are caught by them. This is invariably done by one individual.

(e) **Gola:** Sometimes they place in the forest a number of balls made of flour containing some poisonous substance. Next day they visit the spot to find whether an animal has eaten some of the balls and is killed.

All these primitive methods of hunting are gradually falling into disuse, because they find guns most handy and sure for their game of deer, stag-deer, wild-boars, jungle-fowls and peacocks etc. They take a great delight in boar hunting only with the exception of Gosain Tharus. The tiger hunt is rarely done by them. All the Tharus avoid killing monkeys, sparrows, owls and rats. They are great meat eaters and relish all kinds of preparations of meat. They roast it in fire and dry it in the sun for storage.

Collecting Forest Leaves, Fruits and Roots

The proximity of the forests has made the Tharus well acquainted with the use of some of the wild leaves and

fruits which are available during different seasons of the year, specially in the rainy season. The popular among these are *patpara*, *banamethi*, *garjawa*, *luchaka*, *bathuwa*, *lataphika*, *phalosa*, *furr*, leaves of *rewa* and *papari*. A large varieties of wild fruits, such as, *khagasa*, *parawar*, *pindare* and *birani* are also collected by them. A wild grass *nari* and root *talbhansire* are a great delicacy in summer. These wild leaves, fruits, roots and their preparations are very much relished by the Tharus, though these may not be a source of income to them.

Construction and Repairing of Houses

In every village, there are a few Tharus who are skilled and experienced in the art of constructing houses and doing minor repairs. These people give free labour to their neighbours whenever approached by them. There is a definite understanding that their labour and service will be amply compensated at some other occasion by the fellows who ask for their help. This practice is based on the remarkable sense of reciprocity of mutual obligations for one another at the time of need. This enables even a poor Tharu to build his house and to look after its repairs without worrying about the payment of wages.

Carpentry

Although every Tharu cannot claim to be an expert in carpentry, yet he can manage to make the important articles he needs. He makes his own carts, ploughs, *patela* and other agricultural implements, doors, pillars and cots etc., while an unskilled Tharu has to purchase the ready-made wheels from a professional carpenter from outside. Some of the Tharus can make big wooden boxes and pillars with beautiful designs carved on them. Palta of Rampura is well known for his wood carving, but he never sells the articles he makes, because he displays them as a show of his handicraft.

Smithy

As a rule, the Tharus cannot be said to be expert black-smiths. However, they can manage minor repairs to their

Gadari



Fig. 29

Pitara

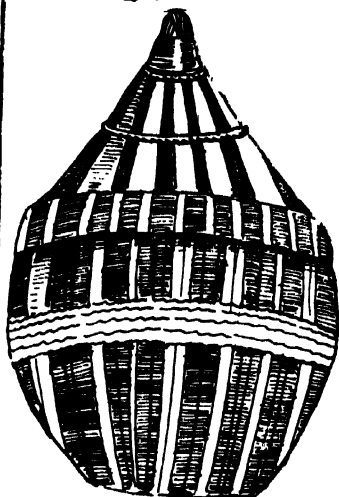


Fig. 30

Dala

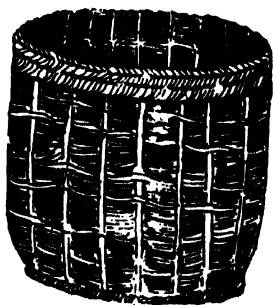


Fig. 31

Sikaura



Fig. 32

Bakhari

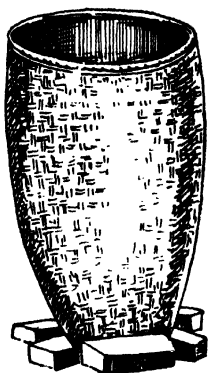


Fig. 33

Dalawa



Fig. 34

Tokari



Fig. 35

Palla



Fig. 36



Plate No. 9. Getting ready for fishing in deep water.



Plate No. 10. Catching fish by hand.

agricultural implements. They can sharpen the plough-share of the plough and can make crude nails because they dislike the idea that their work should suffer on account of lack of external assistance.

Pottery

Tharu women make earthen wares, both large and small, for storing grain (*kuthia* and *kuthala*) and small earthen pots for storing articles of food. They fairly meet their pottery requirements out of their own make ; only a limited number of baked earthen vessels, particularly, the pitchers are bought by them from the professional potters from the local markets and fairs. Women, therefore, save a lot of money which they would otherwise have to spend for purchasing these earthen wares. In this way, they contribute their own share to the domestic economy.

Basketry

Art, such as, embroidery, lace-making and drawing may be highly developed among civilised peoples but the Tharus also can boast of high development of art in their basket-making. They put in their baskets various beautiful patterns of colourful designs. The materials, such as, bamboo, reed and *munj* (a kind of tall grass) which grow abundantly in the Tarai are provided by their menfolk. First of all, the bamboo and reed must be soaked in water and then split into small chips. Then women weave patterns of flowers and animals in their baskets. The more expert among them can even invent new designs and patterns. The size and form of baskets differ according to the various purposes they are used for. They are made for domestic use or for presents on marriage and other occasions but never for sale.

Making of Fishing Nets, Traps, Mats, Ropes and Musical Instruments

From an early age, the Tharus train their children in making fishing nets and traps, mats and ropes etc. during

their off season when they have very little work in their fields. Mats are made from a thick grass and also from palm-leaves ; while ropes, from *munj* and *sanai* (sunn-hemp). They weave very intricate type of fishing nets from the untwisted thread purchased from the market. They make the fishing traps, such as, *pakhaiya*, *dhimari* out of bamboo chips. Sometimes a Tharu may sell these nets and traps, if he makes more than his own requirements. For instance, Baljit of Naugamanath Bisaunta is skilled at making fishing nets and sells them at the rate of three or four rupees per net.

They also prepare their drums and *miradang*. Kallu Singh of Bawanpuri has earned a high reputation for this work and earns four or five rupees on each drum or *miradang*.

Tharu Labour

A Tharu dislikes to work as a mere labourer on another man's fields. His highest ambition in life is to own a piece of land, no matter how small it may be, as his very own to be able to cultivate it as a free man. It is due to the fact that he is conscious of the man-power within himself and has enough self-confidence and initiative to make even an unattractive piece of land productive by the sweat of his own labour and toil as an independent landholder. He works as a labourer as long as he is landless and has not enough means to make his own implements and to purchase his bullocks. But the moment he can manage to acquire these and work on a piece of land of his own to maintain himself and his family on it, he frees himself from all the obligations as a labourer. Bhajji had deserted his original village Uldan Bisaunta five years ago and worked as a labourer for three years when he settled down in Umaru Kalan of Khatima Tahsil. Now that his brother-in-law had given him three *bighas* of land for his own farming, he was the proudest man of his day in spite of the fact that he had borrowed money to buy a pair of bullocks.

It may seem a paradox to find landless Tharus in the vast uncultivated area of the Tarai, but the explanation for this situation is to be found in the fact that the villages



Plate No. 11. Making a fishing trap.



Plate No. 12. Giving a pattern to a **Jal**.

which were settled in the regions farther away from the forests and were quite safe from the wild animals, began to attract a large number of the Tharus who migrated there. But the cultivable land had already been appropriated by the earlier settlers. Hence many of the new-comers remained landless. They had no other alternative but to work as labourers in the hope that they would be able to acquire a piece of land at some future date. This class of landless labourers is now employed by the *Mustajars* and *Padhans* who cannot manage to cultivate large acreage of their own land. I made a closer survey of such labourers as tabulated below :—

TABLE X

Table Showing Number of Landless Labourers in 33 Villages of Khatima and Sitarganj Tahsils.

No. of villages	Tahsil Khatima		Tahsil Sitarganj	
	Name of village	No. of landless labourers	Name of village	No. of landless labourers
1	Khetasanda	2	Nagara	...
2	Khan Amau	...	Sunkheri	...
3	Maholiya Bhur	...	Sidla Nabadiya...	...
4	Sujiya	4	Dhora	...
5	Bigrabagh	2	Patti Khera	...
6	Kanjabagh	2	Baghaura	...
7	Kotra	8	Tharu Tisaur	...
8	Alabirdi	1	Bawanpuri	1
9	Chhinaki	1	Nakuliya	...
10	Naugamanath			
	Bisauta	...	Chamarpura	...
11	Umaru Khurd	...	Paseni	...
12	Umaru Kalan	...	Berkhera	...
13	Kuakhhera	1	Bichawa	...
14	Pehaniya	2	Harniya	...
15	Banausi	...	Dhanpur	...
16	Sariyasara	...	Barkidandi	...
17	...	...	Tapera	...
Total		23		

The Tharus who have no other option but to serve as labourers on other peoples' farms are employed on the *bonda* system of wages. Under this system the labourer is allotted one *bigha* of land for himself and he can choose the best plot from the fields of his employer. He is also entitled to take his meals at the employer's house or receive six maunds of rice half-yearly. Besides, his employer loans to him a hundred rupees or more and does not encourage him to pay off this debt too soon in order to retain him in his service as long as he possibly can, for labour supply is so limited. Moreover, due to the higher demand for labour and keen competition among the employers themselves, the demand for loans on the part of the labourers has also risen very much higher. Sometimes the debt of a labourer is paid off by another competitive landlord who wants to entice away labourers to work on his fields. It came to our notice that Karn Singh of Kuakhera has enticed away Biwariya by clearing off his debt immediately and offering some attractive terms to him.

The labourer tills the soil, ploughs the fields, helps in other operations on the farm, tends cattle and attends to other domestic duties, if necessary.

His poor economic status does not bring upon him indignities that the lower caste people have to suffer from the caste Hindus, nor is he considered a menial in ceremonies and rituals. He participates as an equal of any other member of his community. Nevertheless, this poor status certainly does cause him disabilities of a sort, for instance, no Tharu having some land at his disposal would like to marry his daughter to him and this disability weighs upon his mind to such an extent that he is constantly spending all his energies to change his economic status.

In the next chapter we shall discuss the complicated problems of social organisation among the Tharus and show how caste differences have already become fairly acute due to the contact with the Hindus. It may be noted here that this landless labour population, that we have been discussing so far, usually comes from the lower section. This inference may be illustrated from the table XI.



Plate No 13. Twisting the rope to make it stronger.



Plate No. 14. Giving the fishing touch to **Dhimari**.

TABLE XI

Table Showing Composition of Labourers According to Different Higher and Lower Sections.

Sections	No. of Labourers	
1. Rana Thakur	8	(Higher section)
2. Rawat	10	(Lower section)
3. Gosain	4	„ „
4. Dangra	1	„ „
5. Khunka	1	„ „
Total	24	

If a labourer finds that he cannot maintain his large family on the meagre produce of the plot of land he has been given by his employer, he asks the able members of his family to become labourers like himself. Lachhman, a Rawat, in Kotra village, is a labourer on Chanu's fields and his two sons, Chamaru and Ruphal, are employed by Sri Ram and Govinda respectively.

In case of widows who have neither land nor any one to support them they are mostly employed by the richer Tharus to grind, pound the grain or help in domestic duties on the mere pittance of food and clothing.

Government Service

Some educated Tharus were entrusted with the Government jobs in the Forest and Revenue departments, and the District Boards, as forest guards, patwaris, school teachers, clerks and peons. Nearly all the patwaris were recruited from the Tharu community. Two Tharus, Kallu Singh of Khetasanda Kham and Chinta Ram of Sunkhari were even promoted to posts of Naib Tahsildar during the British administration. To the great disappointment of the Government and the Tharus, such educated Tharus had not been able to win a high reputation or respect for themselves. On the other hand, they lived a debauchee's life and yielded to every form of

corruption. Kallu Singh even died of excessive drinking. This has left a very bad impression on the popular mind about the educated Tharus. The common opinion is that when an educated Tharu is appointed to a high office he begins to act haughtily and expects bribes of all kinds even from his friends and relatives for very small favours. For instance, Jwala Prasad of Kanjabagh, the manager of Cooperative Bank at Khatima, never advanced loans to the members of the Bank without demanding a certain quantity of liquor. His drinking habits so overpowered him as to involve him in the embezzlement of funds of the Bank. Eventually, he had to be dismissed from his job with disgrace. A number of such cases could be cited. The administration is, therefore, reluctant to employ the Tharus to any responsible post. This is resented by the disgruntled elements as well as the community as a whole. However, a large section of the educated and well-to-do Tharus do not seek Government employment for the problems of transfer and possible disrepute in their community. By and large, even the educated find it more profitable in the long run to stick to farm life.

The foregoing presentation of the various occupations of the Tharus and their relative importance will have easily suggested enough to the reader. That although agriculture is by far the most pivotal economic activity of the Tharus, left to itself, it would hardly account for the self-sufficient character of the Tharu economy as a whole. Hunting, fishing and collecting forest fruits and roots, for instance, add their quota to the food supply; similarly, functions like carpentry, smithy, house-repairing, basket-making etc. minimise their requirements of purchases from outside. Last but not the least is the nature of economic cooperation which has contributed a lot to the total set-up of the Tharu economics.

Trade and Barter

Formerly, the Tharus acquired a few necessities beyond what they themselves could not produce, nor manufacture the barter or exchange system and trade as such was not

known to them, now owing to the greater demand or a variety of merchandise, the barter system is gradually being replaced by trade based on monetary transactions. But the Tharu women still exchange grain for commodities, such as, bangles, trinkets, spices etc. from the vendors and small shop-keepers. Often the vendor is the gainer who makes more than the actual value of his commodity.

As regards their larger transactions for selling the grain, the Muslim *Banjaras* and *Pahari Baniyas* who come to their villages after each harvesting season, buy the grain from the Tharus and take full advantage of their simplicity and ignorance by exploiting them in the most unscrupulous manner. Very often, they give them entirely wrong quotations for current market prices in the plains. A *Banjara* purchased five maunds of paddy at six seers per rupee from Tula Ram of Tapera village, while current price was only three and a half seers per rupee. Furthermore, when it comes to weighing the grain, a *Banjara* gains half a seer in every transaction of two seers, because the Tharus do not have standard weights and always sell the grain according to their own weight of *dhari* of two and a half seers but in actual practice it is treated as two seers only. Very recently, some of the educated Tharus, such as, Rangi Lal and Karn Singh have come to realize the advantage of selling their grain to the Cooperative Bank at Khatima. The grain sold by the Tharus are paddy, wheat, gram out of which paddy forms the bulk on which depends the prosperity of the Tharus.

Expenditure

The Tharus have been steadily developing self-sufficiency in growing food-grains and in supplying their requirements of tools and implements of their own make. There remain a few articles for the purchase of which they have to spend money. But, because their wants for manufactured goods are increasing, their expenditure is also on the increase. A Tharu now spends his money on better agricultural implements, iron tools, household utensils and

vessels, gun, clothes and ornaments. The Tharus spend a much larger amount of money on ceremonies, such as, birth of a child, marriage and death. The heaviest expenses are made on liquor on all such occasions. For example, on the *chhathi*, the purification ceremony on the sixth day of the child birth, Garbu Ram of Baghaura village spent a sum of rupees 85 and on liquor alone rupees 50. On the occasion of *Dikhnauri*, the engagement ceremony, Ram Charan of Barkidandi spent rupees 112 on the following items :—

Liquor	Rs. 70-0-0
Sweets	Rs. 25-0-0
Goat	Rs. 12-0-0
Dance	Rs. 5-0-0
Total.	Rs. 112-0-0

Marriage is the most expensive item and the bridegroom's family has to meet a major part of its expenses. Bairagi Singh, the *Padhan* of Nakuliya, spent more than 500 rupees on his son's wedding, whereas a poor Tharu, Khamai Ram, managed his nephew's wedding in a sum of 100 rupees.

Now-a-days re-marriage and the marriage of divorced women have become more expensive than ordinary marriages, because of the high rate of compensation demanded by the parties concerned. There are instances when this rate of compensation reached four figures. Madan Singh of Umaru Khurd had to pay rupees 2,000 to the husband of Parwati to marry her after she had divorced him. In addition to these, the expenses at the actual funeral ceremony are less than at the *Barshi* ceremony of the deceased. Dhum Singh spent only ten rupees on the funeral of his wife, while he spent rupees 120 on the *Barshi*. Furthermore, it is to be noted that the expenses quoted for all these ceremonies do not include cost of food-grain in the feasts. In any case, a major portion of a Tharu's income is to be spent on the ceremonial obligations which he can in no way escape.

We, therefore, find the way paved for a deeper and more comprehensive incorporation into the Tharu culture of the ways and notions of the alien folks, the acceptance of their goods, the adoption of their technical methods, the introduc-



Plate No. 15. "We drink liquor like water"

tion of their money economy. Iron or steel implements and tools have a much wider sphere of employment and money came into use as a medium for conducting business transaction. Not only tools and implements but also other luxury goods entered into the economic purview of the Tharus. In food and clothing at all events, the habits of the Tharus have become assimilated quite closely to those of their Hindu neighbours. On the whole, there is a widespread desire on their part to secure the results of Hindu enterprise and skill but to retain at the same time their economic independence and self-sufficiency to a very great extent. We find the Tharus employed in many capacities not merely as unskilled and illiterate labourers but as educated clerks, teachers, patwaris, revenue officers and peons, proving themselves skilful and industrious.

If we probe deeper into the question of the vitality of the Tharu economy, we find that all the changes that are visible in the recent trends of Tharu economics, have not altered the basic core of Tharu economics, namely, its cooperative agricultural enterprise and its predominantly self-sufficing character.

V

SOCIAL ORGANISATION

Organisation of the Tharu Society*

A. C. Turner¹ in 1931 Census Report divided the whole tribe of the Tharus into two moieties, higher and lower. The higher moiety comprised the Batha, Birtia, Badvait, Dahait, Mahtum and Rawat, and the lower moiety, the Buxa, Khunka, Rajia, Sansa, Jugia and Dangra. The former was hypergamous to the latter but in course of time the higher moiety stopped taking brides from the lower one. Consequently, the six sections of the higher moiety had become an endogamous group, so also the six of the lower moiety. At present the higher moiety only with the exception of Rawat has its social commensality in regard to interdining and intermarriage.

Kuri of the Tharus has the identical function which *Got* or *Gotra* has for the Hindus. *Kuri* or *Gotra* is a generic name which is given after real or imaginary ancestor, or preferably a sage or a holy person. One of the main functions of this name is that it serves as a very important distinguishing category between the higher and lower castes. It is regarded as an exogamous unit among the higher castes and marriage with any person belonging to the same *Gotra* is considered incest and, therefore, such a marriage is highly tabooed. Among the lower castes, on the other hand, it is not a serious offence. In fact they prefer to marry the members of the same *Gotra* as if to maintain a sort of purity of blood. This distinc-

* Refer to author's article, 'Directed Culture Change Among the Tharus'. Agra University Journal of Research, Letters Vol. IV., Jan. 1958 pp. 53-68.

1. A. C. Turner, Census Report of United Provinces, 1931, Vol. XVIII, p. 599.



Plate No. 16. A Rana Thakur.

tion between the higher and the lower castes among the Hindus on the basis of *Gotra* exogamy in the former group and *Gotra* endogamy in the latter does not find any comparison with that among the Tharus. They seem to have evolved a dichotomous organisation of their own community—higher and lower. Each higher section had within itself a number endogamous *kuries*. This is well explained in Sadhu Ram's statement :—

“Batha, Birtia, Dahait, Badvait, and Mahtum are different *Kuries* of our own community without any distinction in their social status. We marry amongst our own *Kuries*. Rawat, Dangra Khunka, Rajia, Sansa, Buxa and Jugia are definitely lower and so we do not have marriage alliance with them nor do we dine with them.”

It is true that the five *Kuries* consider themselves superior to the rest of the Tharus with whom they do not even exchange their *hukkah* (hubble-bubble) unless the pipe is made of hollowed bamboo. It may be stated that recent restrictions on social commensality regarding interdining and intermarriage have been imposed on the lower sections as a direct influence of the Hindu caste structure in which there is a definite scheme of social precedence and degree of social intercourse and higher value is placed on rules regarding social commensality.

The tendency towards fission of the Tharus into many sections has certainly slackened because of the growing solidarity and unity among them. The five *Kuries* in particular, have been carrying on a vigorous propaganda and campaign for social reform for the last two decades and lately they have started an agitation to bolster up their Rajput or Kshatriya origin. This claim is based upon an anecdote which goes back to the period of turmoil, commotion and fighting against the Muslims. The story as believed by the Tharus is that Rana Pratap of the Sisodia clan of the Kshatriyas had died a glorious death on the battlefield while fighting against the soldiers of the King Akbar. The followers of Rana Pratap were forced to take refuge in the uninhabited region of the Naini Tal Tarai and Nepal. Historically speaking, there is a strong evidence that Rana Pratap did fight against the

army of the Muslim King. Rana was one of the only few who opposed the Muslim King and suffered from all kinds of tortures. The popularity of his sacrifice for national freedom still holds high in the folk literature of northern India. Moreover, he is also accepted as a national hero by the Hindus.

The five *Kuries* are hard at work to prove that it were the Rajputs of Sisodiya clan who developed strange and queer social customs in their isolated habitat which had earned for them the name, Tharus. Some of their leaders have taken the role of active social reformers and propagandists to revive the long forgotten heritage of traditions and customs of the Sisodia Rajputs, who are supposed to belong to the second in order of hierarchy of the Hindu caste structure. This conscious revivalism in the Tharu social structure has been engendered by their leaders to indicate a continuity in their cultural life which was broken during the Muslim period (if we literally believe in their version of history). In their concerted attempts to identify with the high caste Hindus, the Kshatriyas, they have gone so far that they have adopted a new appellation, Rana Thakur of Sisodiya clan. Thakur is a common term for the Kshatriyas but Rana Thakur stands for a still higher degree of precedence in social stratification as it is identified with the royal blood of Rana Pratap's family, and therefore, is highly laden with prestige and social status. The Tharus of the higher five *Kuries* think it derogatory if they are addressed as Tharus and take exception to this and prefer to be called as Rana Thakurs. In fact they are frequently humoured by other communities and to a certain extent exploited by their sensitiveness with regard to this change in the term of address. Of course, it is much more convenient and easy to establish rapport with them if the interviewer or field worker addresses them as Rana Thakurs.

A new endogamous group, Rana Thakur of Sisodiya clan, therefore, has come into being and owes its origin to the pseudo-historical story described above. But this situation is not unique with the Tharus as such. Anyone familiar with the general consciousness among the so-called lower and tribal communities in India will bear witness to this kind of situation. There is a general trend among the socially backward

communities in India to claim for themselves a higher social status denied them so far by the high caste Hindus. No wonder that the Tharus have not been able to isolate themselves from this general wave of demanding a higher social status in the hierarchy of Hindu social structure. The question, why all these lower castes and tribes identify themselves with the Kshatriyas, the second in order, and not with the Brahmins the first, or the Vaisyas, the third in order, is a very complicated and difficult one to answer. Hypothetically speaking, one may explain that they do not identify with the Brahmins because they are at the top and, therefore, they seem unapproachable. Again, the identification with the Brahmins looks remote and difficult to achieve because of the traditional image of the Brahmins and the role they perform in the society, for instance, the role of the priest and the teacher. High demands of spirituality and education etc., make the Brahmins almost unapproachable to the lower caste people. Now the reason why they fail to identify with the Vaisyas or Banias is that the traditional image of the Vaisyas is that they are business groups predominantly and business means money which the lower castes do not possess either to start business or to claim proximity with the Vaisyas. There is another aspect of the question. The lower castes and tribes do not have very high regard for the Vaisyas or Banias. The stereotyped personality of the Vaisyas is that they are cunning, miser and clever. And this traditional image of these people no one can better understand than the lower caste people because they have been really exploited by the business community in some form or the other. A recent study of "Social Integration Between Higher and Lower Castes in Lucknow City" sponsored by Prof. Kali Prasad of Psychology Department, Lucknow University testifies to this fact very well.

It seems, therefore, that the Tharus like other tribal and lower caste groups have rejected their identification either with the Brahmins or with the Vaisyas. Now the question why they identify with the second in order, the Kshatriya, is a basic one. The reasons for such a kind of identification may be as follows:

1. One of the most important meeting grounds between the lower castes and the Kshatriyas is that both have been directly connected with land. The Kshatriyas have been traditional rulers and land owners and the lower castes and tribes are either cultivators or landless labourers, that is, dependent on land in some way or the other.
2. Land from the very beginning of Indian civilisation was associated with prestige and power which can be acquired. This also means that land in an agricultural society of India will have its paramount importance. Therefore, their association with a landowning community may have been motivated by a desire for prestige.
3. Again, the stereotyped image of a Kshatriya may be favourable to these people. The Kshatriya is supposed to be brave, fearless, hardworking and fighting type. So the lower castes and tribes in the process of fighting for their social status in the Hindu hierarchical structure would ordinarily prefer to identify with the Kshatriyas.
4. It may also be easier to manufacture a myth about their association with the Kshatriyas due to historical reasons. A much greater social disintegration of the Kshatriyas took place during many epochs of Indian history, which may give validity to the tales like the one the Tharus have put forward. There may be some truth in some of their versions, but most of them may be cooked-up myths. We may not go into the details of their validity or historical truthfulness but the fact remains that these anecdotes, historical or pseudo-historical, imaginary or mythological, are shared by the members of their respective communities and are believed to be the real basis of rationalisation of their claim for the higher social status. In fact, it is a kind of reaction against the high caste Hindus who would have liked to keep these so-called backward peoples at their low level of social scale.



Plate No. 17. A Khunka male.



Plate No. 18. A Khunka belle.

This is the story of the organisation of the Tharus belonging to the Rana Thakur group. The lower moiety which is in minority has certainly welcomed the name of Thakur for their group of seven sections thus placing themselves a few degrees lower than the Rana Thakurs in the social cadre. Since no genuine attempt seems to have been made by the lower moiety to claim a higher social status for themselves because of their comparatively small number, abject poverty and general backwardness, they still cling to their original sub-divisions, though they also feel satisfied if they are at least identified with the Thakur not belonging to the royal descent as claimed by the higher moiety. Therefore, each section in the lower moiety is a separate entity, maintains sectional endogamy and taboos interdining and intermarriage among them. But ambitious efforts in tracing their lineage to the Rajput origin both in the higher and lower moieties have led them to adopt '*Singh*' as suffix to their names. This is the first important step which both these sections have taken to identify themselves with the Thakur or Kshatriya caste, because every Thakur invariably has this suffix of '*Singh*' after his name except in very few cases where they have dropped it due to the popular movement of developing a 'casteless society'.

A sample of thirty three villages in the Tarai shows that the number of endogamous sections has been reduced from twelve to eight, since the rest of them are subsumed under one broad endogamous unit, The Rana Thakur. The Table XII shows that the Rana Thakurs form the bulk of Tharu population; for instance, 87.4% of the total population of 33 villages are the Rana Thakurs. The other group, Thakurs, constitutes a minority and is further divided into seven sub-sections as described earlier. Of these seven, three, Rajia, Sansa and Buxa appear to be almost extinct by their relative absence in thirty three villages. The Dangra also falls in the same category showing a negligible percentage of only 0.37 out of 806 families. Among the lower group, numerical strength of the Rawat Gosain and Khunka reflects their respective status and strength in the Tharu social organisation.

TABLE XII

Distribution of families of different sections in Khatima and Sitarganj Tahsils.

Tahsil	Rana Thakur	Rawat	Gosain	Khunka	Dangrai	Rajia	Sansa	Buxa	Total
Khatima	406	49	27	—	3	—	—	—	485
Sitarganj	299	—	—	22	—	—	—	—	321
Total no. of families	705	49	27	22	3	—	—	—	806
Percentage	87.4	6.07	3.35	2.72	0.37	—	—	—	100

Though all these eight sub-sections restrict themselves in inter-marriage and interdining, the Tharus as a whole may be said to have a common culture. Generally speaking, their customs and practices, rites and rituals are more or less the same for all the sections except that the Gosain Tharus will never eat pork, since they are said to have descended from a Gosain saint, and that the Khunkas give only one feast *Roti* to their castemen, *Biradari*, whereas the rest of the sections have to give two feasts after the death of a relative.

In general, it may be said, that a feeling of anxiety for attaining a higher social status from that of 'scheduled caste' to which they are assigned even in the official records so far, does exist among all the sections, though it is much more organised among the Rana Thakur group of the Tharu community. So, if the lower sections are claiming themselves to belong to Thakur or Kshatriya caste, the higher section has gone a step further in identifying itself with the royal blood of Kshatriyas, popularly known as Rana Thakurs among the Tharus. In the process of their claiming a higher social status and further identifying with the high caste Hindus they are making genuine and persistent efforts to give up some and if possible, all of their tribal practices and adopt the traits of Hindu community in their ceremonies at birth, marriage and death. Finally they are aiming at complete dissociation from their indigenous culture pattern and are motivated towards identification with and assimilation within the Kshatriya caste of the Hindu social order.

Tharu Family

The nucleus of social organisation in the Tharu society is the family. The family among the Tharus is patrilocal and patrilineal. Although the patrilocal family is the rule, some stray examples of patrilineal but matrilocal families, which arise out of sheer economic necessity, as, for example, when a son-in-law known as, *gharjamai*, comes to live with his father-in-law on the understanding that he would assist him during the latter's infirmity or old age. Sankal in Sunkheri village joined his father-in-law, Daya Ram, with this idea.

Both the joint and single family systems are found among the Tharus. In a joint family the parents, their married sons with their children and grand children all live together, have a common kitchen and work together for their livelihood. The single family unit starts either as a continuation of its parent body or when domestic quarrels become too bitter to allow the members to live together in harmony. At present, there is a tendency towards break-up of the joint family. A household census of thirty three villages clearly shows the decline of joint family system as tabulated below:—

TABLE XIII
Distribution of joint and single families in Khatima Tahsil.

Sl. No.	Name of village	No. of houses	No. of joint families	No. of single families	Total
1	Khetasanda Kham	30	7	21	28
2	Amau	26	13	12	25
3	Maholiya Bhur	27	19	8	27
4	Sujiya	48	16	31	47
5	Bigrabagh	23	11	9	20
6	Kanjabagh	58	35	21	56
7	Kotra	47	24	21	45
8	Alabirdi	25	10	14	24
9	Chhinaki	14	5	9	14
10	Naugamanath Bisaunta	23	11	11	22
11	Umaru Khurd	16	7	9	16
12	Umaru Kalan	27	9	15	24
13	Kuakhhera	27	13	11	24
14	Pehaniya	59	27	27	54
15	Banusi	44	21	18	39
16	Sariyasara	23	6	14	20
Total		517	234	251	485

TABLE XIV

Distribution of joint and single families in Sitarganj Tahsil.

Sl. No.	Name of village	No. of houses	No. of joint families	No. of single families	Total
1	Nagara	21	11	10	21
2	Sunkheri	21	10	11	21
3	Sidda Nabadiya	29	11	16	27
4	Dohra	15	5	9	14
5	Patti Khera	19	7	11	18
6	Baghaura	15	7	8	15
7	Tharu Tisaur	12	6	4	10
8	Bawanpuri	26	10	15	25
9	Nakuliya	22	12	10	22
10	Chamarpura	22	13	9	22
11	Paseni	12	5	6	11
12	Barkhera	31	14	15	29
13	Bichawa	16	9	7	16
14	Harriya	6	1	5	6
15	Dhanpur	26	9	15	24
16	Barkidandi	26	13	13	26
17	Tapera	15	7	7	14
Total		334@	150	171	321

Table XIII shows that in 7 out of 16 villages single family system predominates, while two villages, namely, Naugamanath Bisaunta and Pehaniya are on the way to change over to single family system, because already in these villages number of joint and single family balances in a precarious manner. Now only in the remaining 7 villages joint family system predominates.

Table XIV presents a clearer picture showing that Sitarganj Tahsil is adopting the single family system more rapidly than Khatima Tahsil. Here 10 out of 17 villages have grater number of single families. In five villages the number of joint families is greater than that of the single families. The two villages, namely Barkidandi and Tapera

@Some of the houses contain single male or female member and hence they do not form a family. This accounts for the discrepancy in this and in the last column in both the Tables XIII and XIV.

show an equal balance but the tendency is fast growing to break away from the joint family.

Again, the structure of joint family varies in form and size from village to village and from family to family. The father is the head and the recognized authority of the family. Next to the him in authority is his eldest son. But in these days the younger generations are putting forth their claim very strongly to share the authority with their father, or the eldest brother. As has been stated before, the need of a helping hand in old age or in abject poverty may bring a son-in-law to live with his father-in-law's family.

The increasing demand of younger generation to have a hand in the management of the joint family, or their desire to set up single families is aiding disintegration of the joint family. This tendency has been responsible for eliminating joint living entirely in some cases and also for reducing the size of many joint families as given in the Table XV.

TABLE XV.

Table showing decrease in the size of the joint families in Khatima and Sitarganj Tahsils.

Married couples in joint families.	No. of joint families in Khatima Tahsil	Percentage	No. of joint families in Sitarganj Tahsil	Percentage
2	144	61.53	82	54.67
2—4	68	29.06	56	37.33
4—6	17	7.26	8	5.33
6—8	4	1.72	3	2.0
8—10	—	—	—	—
10—12	—	—	1	0.67
Over 12	1	0.43	—	—
Total	234	100	150	100

Majority of the joint families do not have more than four married couples. Therefore, the tendency to have over ten

families is fast disappearing. Though the institution of the joint family has changed both in its form and size, the older people are trying to preserve its tradition. It is customary for them to criticize this tendency of disintegration of the joint family system. Disapproving of this, Barku Ram of Pehaniya says, "It is easy to start a new family and build a new home but one soon realizes when it comes to plough one's fields or reap the harvest with limited labour. Hence, the single family system is not very economical, nor convenient. The one who breaks away from a joint family has to rue for his mistakes sooner or later".

It is true that the joint family has several advantages over a single family in the agricultural society of the Tharus. Working in their individual and corporate capacity they carry on their agricultural and other supplementary pursuits. It is an ideal combination for such occupations like farming which needs concerted efforts and a spirit of cooperation. The head of the joint family acting as the authority is believed to be fairly self-reliant and directs the activities of other members to perform their respective duties. On the other hand, the individual is absorbed in the joint family and he wants to free himself to develop his innate potentialities, and satisfies his needs for autonomy and independence. Consequently, the joint families are breaking up where the son is sensitive to any control by the father or the eldest brother. For instance, Dharam Singh of Tisaur Tharu broke away from this father and his brothers who objected to his spending Rs. 800/- as compensation price for marrying Bandhiya. This was Dharam Singh's third marriage and the father argued that he had already spent enormous amount on his two previous marriages. Thereupon, Dharam Singh asked for a division of the property of the joint family and demanded his share of the land. He somehow managed to collect a sum of Rs. 800/- to marry Bandhiya and to start a home of his own in the same village.

In another instance of the disruption of a joint family Dhum Singh, the *Mustajar* of Barkidandi village in Sitarganj Tahsil, who was the head of a big joint family decided to break up his large family. He reasoned the whole case thus.

"I lost my wife and my sons' wives indulged in domestic quarrels which I could not control. In the end, I decided that it would be better for all of us to break up and separate. I preferred to stay with the youngest son, Sri Ram, who was not involved in the domestic quarrels." A case like this helps to strengthen a belief among the Tharus that separation in time saves friction within the family and avoids much of the bitterness of a strained relationship. They are realising more and more the economic and social advantages of this practice. "It is better to separate rather than quarrel morning and evening," so said Sadhu Ram of Bawanpuri, explaining to me the current belief among his own people. But then he added "even after the separation we continue our relationship just the same and help each other whenever necessity arises."

Separation from a joint family brings upon the man the responsibility to build a separate house for himself and his family. But for this he is helped by his relatives, friends and even by his own parents or brothers as the case may be. From his parental home he brings with him personal possessions only or which he has received after the partition of his ancestral property. Now he sets up the boundary line of his own piece of land and cultivates it in cooperation with his family members. When any occasion arises, relatives and friends help him. Furthermore, he is bound to them not only by blood alone but with strong ties of religion, because families belonging to the same ancestor must worship the same deities even after their separation. Thus filial attachment is not at all impaired by merely going out of parental roof and building a separate house. The new establishment continues to owe its allegiance to the parental unit, though it certainly frees the individual member from the irksome control of his elders.

In the context of social organisation of the Tharus the single family unit does not seem to suffer from a lack of co-operative labour to any appreciable extent, because of strong sense of reciprocity of mutual obligations and community feelings among them. But the only disadvantage that arises out of the splitting of the joint family appears to be the reduction of the size of the holding as we have already described.

For, although new single family unit may, at times, not get the assistance of co-operative labour during the busy season, it is not so much because others are unwilling to help, but just because their hands are too full. Even so in practice it has been observed that the filial and fraternal bonds with the parent family give rise to special consideration and in times of need the help is rushed to him.

In the social organization of the Tharus, the family, joint or single and not the individual is regarded as the primary unit. Invitations for marriages, other ceremonies and feasts are not sent to individuals but to families. In the tribal *Panchayat*, when occasion arises, the family is represented by its head. For a breach of tribal law or custom it is not the individual offender who is ex-communicated and shunned but his family as a whole is punished.

Inheritance and Partition

The different members of a joint family hold the agricultural land in common ownership. Added to this, they also possess several things in common, such as, fishing nets, traps, agricultural implements and household utensils. Thus, for all practical purposes, the property is owned in common by all the members of the family, but it is under the custody of the head of the family, who is not authorised to sell or exchange it without the consent of the members of the family. There are only certain articles over which the individual members can claim their exclusive right. Thus a Tharu male has his exclusive claim to all the gifts that are made to him by his father-in-law. Similarly, a woman is the sole owner of all the ornaments and other property she has acquired from her parents at her marriage.

The Tharu joint family resembles a Hindu joint family under the *Mitakshara* law, in which all the male members lineally descended from a common ancestor are co-partners in the property. If a member of such a family demands partition and share, he has a right to have it. Cattle, money and other movable and immovable property are equally divided among the sons. But, in case the partition takes place during the father's life time, a share is reserved for the father, as

well as for that son or sons who decide to remain with him. On the death of the father his property is divided in equal shares among the sons who have remained with him.

Although the property is jointly owned, the question of inheritance sometimes gives rise to disputes among the members of the family. Complications also arise due to the customs of widow re-marriage and divorce. When Durga Singh of Sisaikhera lost his brother, his sister-in-law (*bhavji*), Mansia, ran away with the deceased's cousin to Tisaur Tharu village and got married to him there. She took with her ornaments and some cash. Durga Singh filed a suit against her at Khatima Tahsil to claim the expenses incurred at his brother's marriage, and the cash she had taken with her. He also prayed that his cousin, Kharg Singh, who was still a minor, should be brought back to live with the family. Later on, he withdrew the case from the court and appealed to the *Panchayat*, consisting of two representatives from each party and one *Sarpanch* to preside over it. The *Panchayat* was composed of Dharam Singh, Bairagi Singh, Indal Singh, Jogi Singh and Hari Singh as *Sarpanch*. Both the parties agreed to abide by the decision of the *Panchayat* and to pay a fine of two hundred rupees to the *Panchayat* if either party failed to carry out the decision. The *Panchayat* decided that all the property belonging to the minor cousin should be sold and the sale proceeds should be deposited in the Co-operative Bank at Khatima in his name until he would come of age to own it. He might be allowed to stay with his sister-in-law, if he wanted and the property of her deceased husband should be left in her care. But if Kharg Singh did not want to go back to live with Durga Singh, the money deposited in the Bank should be paid to the latter as compensation. Both the parties agreed to execute the decision of the *Panchayat*. This is the way the disputes over the distribution of the property are settled more often by the *Panchayat* than by the court.

Daughters are not entitled to any share in their father's property, but unmarried daughters are entitled to maintenance until their marriage, when the expenses of their marriage are to be met out of their parents' assets, if any. The laws of inheritance among the Tharus provide that married women

have equal share in their husband's property and their children can claim their own grandfather's property on the maternal side, if there is no legal heir. Again, if a widow does not remarry after her husband's death and if there are no son or sons or any legal claimant of the property, she can inherit all the property of the deceased husband. Kausilya of Pipaliya Pastoor in Nanakmata pargana, an issueless widow, thus came to inherit all the property of her deceased husband.

Adoption

A sonless Tharu may adopt a boy as his son. The adopted boy is generally a relative's son. He has to relinquish his claims in his father's property. The adoption is made in the presence and with the approval of the tribal *Panchayat*, otherwise it is not legal.

Gharjamai

A sonless Tharu may also take into his family his son-in-law or a prospective bridegroom for his daughter to live in the same house. Such a bridegroom or a *gharjamai*, if duly taken in accordance with the tribal custom, inherits all the property of his father-in-law on the latter's death.

Village Community

Village community is a compact social unit which consists of a number of different families living in a common settlement and performing certain functions together, which the family alone cannot adequately and satisfactorily perform. We have seen that the smaller villages of the Tharus like Harriya consist of half a dozen families, while larger ones may have fifty to sixty families. Most of these villages are exclusively inhabited by members of one section only, namely, newly-formed Rana Thakurs. Out of thirty-three villages twenty-one are entirely inhabited by Rana Thakurs, while Harriya is also exclusively a Khunka village, and the rest eleven are inhabited by other sections, namely, Gosain and Rawat in addition to Rana Thakurs. The social composition of thirty-three villages is given in the Tables XVI and XVII

TABLE XVI

Table showing the composition of different sections in Khatima Tahsil.

Name of villages	No. of families of different sections inhabiting the villages					
	Rana Thakur	Rawat	Khunka	Gosain	Dangra	Total
1. Khetasanda Khan	14	...	...	12	2	28
2. Amau	22	2	...	...	1	25
3. Maholiya Bhur	27	...	...	...	...	27
4. Sujiya	35	...	...	12	...	47
5. Bigrabagh	45	10	...	1	...	56
6. Kanja-bagh	20	...	...	...	...	20
7. Kotra	31	14	...	...	...	45
8. Alabirdi	11	11	...	2	...	24
9. Chhinaki	7	7	...	...	...	14
10. Naugamanath Bisaunta	21	1	...	...	...	22
11. Umaru Khurd	12	4	...	...	...	16
12. Umaru Kalan	24	...	...	...	...	24
13. Kuakhera	24	...	...	...	...	24
14. Pehaniya	54	...	...	...	...	54
15. Banusi	39	...	...	...	...	39
16. Sariyasara	20	...	...	...	...	20
Total	406	49	...	27	3	485

TABLE XVII

Table showing the composition of different sections in Sitaraganj Tahsil.

Name of villages	No. of families of different sections inhabiting the villages					
	Rana Thakur	Rawat	Khunka	Gosain	Dangra	Total
1. Nagara	21	...	...	...	...	21
2. Sunkheri	21	...	...	...	...	21
3. Sidda Nabadia	27	...	...	...	...	27
4. Dohra	14	...	...	...	...	14
5. Patti Khera	18	...	...	..	...	18
6. Baghaura	15	...	...	...	...	15
7. Tharu Tisaur	10	...	...	...	...	10
8. Bawanpuri	13	...	12	...	...	25
9. Nakuliya	22	...	...	...	...	22
10. Chamarpura	22	...	...	...	...	22
11. Paseni	11	...	...	...	...	11
12. Berkhera	25	...	4	...	...	29
13. Bichawa	16	...	..	...	...	16
14. Harriya	...	...	6	...	...	6
15. Dhanpur	24	...	...	...	...	24
16. Barkidandi	26	...	...	...	...	26
17. Tapera	14	...	...	...	...	14
Total	299	...	22	...	...	321

There may be occasional changes in the composition of the village community, because families residing in one village are at liberty to migrate to another village. So they can and do migrate to another settlement due to unavoidable circumstances as described before, yet the bonds of common habitation coupled with kinship and religious ties are very strong to bind a family with its original village community. The Tharu community does not prohibit marriages within the same village and unlike the custom prevailing among other people, brides have been chosen from the same settlement. Muriya, Bandhu's daughter has been married to Jhalli of the same village, Khetasanda Kham. Similar examples can be easily multiplied. Thus, the kinship

ties among the Tharus are very strong in a village not only because of common habitation and bonds of ancestral and religious relationship but also due to endogamous marriages within the same settlement. These unions give stability and solidarity to the section within which they are performed. This has created a multiplicity of kinship ties. The Barkidandi village has already presented a unique example of such multiple kinship ties.

These kinship ties and local affiliations are responsible for promoting and developing reciprocity and exchange of obligations in the socio-economic life of the Tharus. We have seen how they are helped in their construction and repairing of house by their neighbours and relatives. So during the periods of difficulties, pregnancy and child birth, caprices of evil spirits and similar troubles, the members of village community are ready to help one another. The author saw how a widow living all alone with her children in Rampura village was helped by her neighbours when she was overtaken by an evil spirit. Palta, a *Bharara* of the same village, drove off the evil spirit and the rest of the villagers sympathised with her and comforted her children. Similarly, when Khayali Ram's family was suffering a heavy loss, while his house was set on fire, the whole village rushed to extinguish the flames. Furthermore, the village community feels its responsibility to look after the needs of the disabled and the blind. For instance, Chhoti, a seventy year old blind widow, is fed by the whole village, Khetasanda Kham; her hut is repaired by the villagers and her clothes are sewn by the women of the village. This is not done for mere charity, but as a duty. Chhoti in return for their kindness often takes care of their children, while their parents go out for work.

The village community is also responsible for maintaining law and order in Tharu society. By according social approval, it encourages its members to develop skill in work and initiate technical competence among the people; while by freely expressing social disapproval it instils discipline and brings about conformity to the tribal code of conduct.

Another function of the village community is to see that oral literature of the Tharus is properly learnt and handed

down to generations. Whenever folk songs are sung, folk tales are told and folk dances are arranged, the whole village assembles together to witness and enjoy their tribal performances.

Administration of Village Community.

The administration of the village community is conducted by a hierarchy of village officials who enjoy a high social position. These are the *Padhan* (village headman) the *Mustajar* (contractor and sole proprietor of one village or more), the *Sarwarakar* (spokesman of the *Padhan* or of the *Mustajar*) and the *Kotwar* (village peon). The *Padhan* and the *Mustajar* owe their appointment to the Government, the *Sarwarakar* and the *Kotwar* to the *Padhan* and the *Mustajar*; while the *Bharara* does not owe his position to any one else but himself and his magical power. In social and religious activities of the Tharus the position of the *Bharara* is supreme.

The Padhan and the Mustajar

There is practically no difference in the duties of a *Padhan* and a *Mustajar* except that a *Padhan* represents the people of a village, though he can be removed by villagers in exceptional cases, while a *Mustajar* is merely a contractor who holds certain villages on contract with the Government. The *Padhan* is entitled to receive 10% of the rent collected by him from his tenants as his commission according to the rules and regulations of the Tarai Estate. The *Mustajar* deposits the annual revenue in the Government treasury. The revenue is fixed by rules of the local *Wajib-ul-arz*. He is free to realize the rent from his tenants either in cash or kind.

A *Padhan* has to perform manifold duties relating to administrative, social and religious activities of his village. The administrative duties of a *Padhan* are incorporated in the rules and regulations of the Tarai Estate as amended in 1944. The most important of these are collection of rents, grazing and other Government dues which have to be deposited by him in the nearest treasury by a fixed date. He reports to the officer-in-charge of the Tahsil of any damage to the canals and their appurtenances, of the illegal cultivation of land

and production of any plants or drugs in violation of the excise laws, and occurrence of any calamity to the village, such as, hail, flood, locusts or any epidemic or contagious diseases among the cattle. He is also responsible for the distribution of fixed amount of water for irrigation in his village, for submitting indent for timbers and for reporting cases when a tenant dies without leaving an heir. He has to inform the officer-in-charge of the Tahsil or police station of all the suspicious and sudden deaths, offences like murder and dacoity occurring in his village. He has the power to arrest any bad character or military deserter. Above all, he is the only authority on the spot, who is responsible for the welfare of the villagers in every respect. In actual practice he performs all these duties by satisfying the Government officials with his hospitality and general assistance whenever they come to his village on their official tours, for who could undertake such a responsible job for such a small remuneration as he undertakes to. He is more prompt in playing his role in the socio-religious activities of the Tharus. It is he who lights the Holi and performs his duties on other occasions which are described later.

In case the *Padhan* of a village does not belong to the Tharu community, he is entitled only to collect the rent from the villagers and socio-religious duties are performed by a Tharu of the same village, who commands the confidence of the people. Such a practice is followed in Rampura village of Sitarganj Tashil where the *Padhan* is a domiciled Bengali. The *Padhan*, in any case, is the most important person of the village. His counsel is sought by the villagers in many serious situations, such as, the disputes relating to divorce either by a husband or a wife, fixing of compensation in case of engagement or marriage expenses and in the police or any official atrocities. Rarely, we may find a person to have more influence over the villagers than the *Padhan* himself either due to his better economic status or education.

The office of the *Padhan*, as a rule, is hereditary. On the death of a *Padhan* the eldest son succeeds to his father's office with the formal vote of the villagers and the final approval of the Superintendent of the Estate. In case the son is a minor,

the same procedure is followed but a *Sarwarakar* is appointed by his guardian or mother to work for him during his minority. Badam Singh on the death of his father, Kallu Singh, the *Padhan* of Sujiya village, was nominated to hold this office ever since he was of two years of age. It also appears that if the *Padhan* has a failing health or cannot perform his duties satisfactorily he might delegate his office to his eldest son. Sadhu Ram has recently handed over his *Padhanship* to his eldest son because of his ill-health. In case there is no heir, the villagers must elect another *Padhan*. In some villages tribal authority is passing from the hereditary headmen to those people who have raised their status and influence by earning more money. The best example can be found in the village, Kuakhera, where Karan Singh has superseded the former *Padhan* of the village, Bairagi Singh.

A different practice is followed in a few villages held under the contract of a *Mustajar*. He sometimes appoints his own *Padhan* to collect the rent from the cultivators on his behalf. The *Padhan* of a *Mustajari* village does not receive 10% of the rent collected by him, though the *Mustajar* generally excuses payment of his own rent.

There is hardly any difference in the social status between the *Padhan* of a *kham* (Government) village and that of a *Mustajari* village. The *Padhan* of a *kham* village is a semi-Government official and commands the confidence of the villagers, while the *Padhan* of a *Mustajari* village is simply a representative of the *Mustajar*. In social and religious rites both of them have similar obligations and duties to perform.

The Sarwarakar

During the minority of a *Padhan* of a *kham* village a *Sarwarakar* is appointed. The procedure followed is that the Superintendent leaves it entirely to the mother or the guardian of the minor *Padhan* to choose a *Sarwarakar* to work for him till he attains his age. Usually, the choice falls on a near relative. In Sujiya village Ramkali has appointed her own nephew Bidya Ram, as *sarwarakar*, to work for her minor son, Badam Singh, the *Padhan*. The *Sarwarakar* performs all the duties

of a *Padhan* and enjoys the same social status as a *Padhan*. The usual rate of remuneration received by him is only 30% of what is fixed for the *Padhan* himself.

In a village where the *Mustajar* does not reside, he may also appoint a *Sarwarakar* in his place but his appointment has nothing to do with the Government officials. On behalf of the *Mustajar* he is supposed to collect the rent from the tenants. He also attends to the disputes arising among them and reports the matter to the *Mustajar* concerned. In return for his services, he may not be required to pay the rent to the *Mustajar*. An instance of this type is found in Dhanpur village where Baldew Singh has been deputed as *Sarwarakar* on behalf of Ganga Ram, *Mustajar*, who lives in another village Nagara.

The Kotwar

A *Kotwar* is an assistant appointed by a *Padhan* to help him in discharging his numerous duties and assisting the villagers in their social activities and religious functions. The duties of a *Kotwar* are to give out an invitation to the people of the village for attending various ceremonies performed at birth, marriage, death and other festivals, such as, Diwali and Holi. He is the person to inform the *Bharara* if he happens to reside in another village for offering periodical sacrifices to the gods and goddesses and for dispelling the influence of the agencies of evil spirits attacking the people. It is he who collects people when any Government officer wants them for some meeting. For his remuneration he receives five seers of rice half-yearly on each plough a family possesses. Generally, the Tharus belonging to lower social status or persons of lower castes, the Kahar or Chamar accept such jobs. In Sujiya village Jagat Singh is a Gosain Tharu who maintains his family on the amount of rice he receives as *Kotwar* from the people. Geda Sing, the *Padhan* of Maholiya Bhur, has appointed a *Kotwar* Likhi, who is a Chamar, but now he claims to belong to Jatab caste as he has totally given up the profession of shoe-making.

The Bharara

The position of a *Bharara* in a village is entirely different from that of a *Padhan*, a *Mustajar*, a *Sarwarakar* or a *Kotwar*. He is neither elected nor appointed. He is a medicine-man and the priest-cum-magician. His work as a medicine-man is to find out the causes of diseases and to prescribe indigenous herbs, roots and berries as medicines, and employ, if necessary, his magical powers to cure them through *mantras* (charmed phrases). As a magician he discovers which *bhut* or *bhuts* (evil spirits) are inflicting ailments and are at work to hurt the people. He then figures out what sacrifices are required to propitiate them. He is the only person who can dispel the influence of evil spirits and malevolent gods. As a religious priest he keeps the goddess Bhawani and her sisters in good humour by offering periodical sacrifices to them to ward off the malicious designs of the evil spirits.

A Tharu who has to undergo a training for *Bharrai* (the art of a *Bharara*) has to learn it under an expert *Bharara*. He has to observe certain rules and strictly follow them according to his (*Guru*) teacher's instructions. Jwala Parsad of Naugamanath Bisaunta, who was in training for *Bharrai* for three years under his own father, a notable *Bharara* of his time, described.

"It was a very difficult job to learn *Bharrai*. It unnerved me at first, when I had to go to the *ashamashan* (the cremation ground) and sit all alone for hours many a night to perform invocations and learn the *mantras*. Sometimes it took me even months to succeed in calling a god to do even one favour."

Whenever the *Guru* of the trainee is satisfied that his disciple has attained the requisite occult power to requisition the gods and goddesses and to control the evil spirits, he is proclaimed a *Bharara*. It all depends upon the training of the expert *Guru* to turn out a good *Bharara*. Many Tharus have informed me that a number of young people have taken to *Bharrai* without mastering the art. The result has been that they have done more harm than good to their people. There are only a few *Bhararas* who are said to possess the

power of calling the goddess, *Bhawani*, and to appease her to control the evil spirits when the village is in any way afflicted by their influence. Ganga Ram, a *Bharara* of Gaganpur, is said to have done it a number of times. Sometimes the people of a village approach an expert *Bharara* to take their village under his *ganwat*, that is, the magical control. If he agrees to do so, he is responsible to protect the village from the agencies of evil spirits and offers periodical sacrifices to worship the *Bhawani* and other goddesses for their prompt help to undo the influence of the mischievous spirits. It is not at all obligatory that a *Bharara* should assume the total responsibility of *Bharrai* including the *ganwat*, because he may not feel equal to it. Lalmani *Bharara* of Alabirdi has declined to take the *ganwat* of his own village. Therefore, Bhaggamal of Naugamanath Bisaunta has consented to act for him, though he has the *ganwat* of his own village. This can be accounted for the difference in the magical and occult powers of these two *Bhararas*.

A *Bharara* is entitled to receive from each house of his *ganwat* ten seers of rice in six months for his services. Where the villages do not have facilities of having the services of their own *Bharara*, they have to send for one from another village whenever his help is urgently needed. The people of Tapera village always look for help of the *Bharara* of Bigra-bagh in Khatima Tahsil.

Position of Women

It may seem a paradox to us that in a patriarchal society which the Tharus have to-day, women still enjoy a very dominant position in their community. D. N. Majumdar has explained, "The dominance of women, their rights to property, their maltreatment of their husbands, their active role in fishing, the chase and business negotiations, their liberty in choosing their partners and annulling marriages, all these reproduce conditions of a matriarchal society. The Khasas with whom the Tharus have mixed also show the vestiges of a matriarchal matrix. So it is possible that in the Tarai and the Himalayan region, among the aboriginal Tharus, a matriarchal society existed, which has profoundly influenced

the culture pattern of the Khasas as well as the Tharus'¹ Even to-day the position of women is not that of the family drudge as one may find in some lowly societies. They have considerable freedom and wield great influence in the domestic sphere. The majority of women form the crowd in the markets and fairs, do all the marketing and freely move about, while their husbands only assist them in bringing the articles home, purchased by their wives. Of late, *Jati Sudhar Sabha* of the Tharus has imposed a number of restrictions upon the freedom of women and have tried to put a ban on their going to the market places and fairs, but only a partial success has been achieved in this direction, because a microscopic minority of the Tharus has succeeded in persuading their women to respect their wishes. Furthermore, the significant role of Tharu women in economic and social spheres of Tharu life can never be under estimated. For example, women help men in manifold economic activities, such as, plastering the house, cleaning the cattle-shed, sowing and harvesting, winnowing, storing, pounding and grinding the grain, selling and purchasing the articles of their daily use as has been already described. In addition to this, tribal customs and conventions also provide for their right of ownership of property and possessions of the family. The women are the sole owners of the domestic animals, the produce of the fields and the gardens, while the men have their fishing and hunting nets and traps, the rewards of their manual labour. The ornaments, dress and other articles made by the women for their own use or acquired by them from the parents are their own personal property with which they may deal as they please. But as for property, either movable or, immovable belonging to their husbands they may enjoy or use them so long as they live under their husbands' roof and on their death, the wives inherit it, if they are not left with any male issue. In spite of the fact that men own certain things they are not free to dispose them off, because the consent of their wives is prerequisite to any transaction in the family. But one may not suppose that all the women in the family have equal status. Their status is determined by the position they hold in their own family.

1. Majumdar, Loc. cit., p. 73.



“Plate No. 19. Why not we smoke”?



Plate No. 20. “Why not we roam about in the market like men”?

If there are three women in any particular family, work will be distributed among them according to their position as follows:—

TABLE XVIII

Distribution of work according to the position a woman holds in her family.

Position of women in the family	Duties
1. <i>Jethi</i> (the wife of the eldest son is the senior-most)	Cleaning of cattle-shed, pounding of rice, carrying of seed and meals to the fields; marketing and keeping of accounts and supervising the family.
2. <i>Manjhali</i> (the second son's wife is junior)	Cleaning of utensils, fetching of water, sweeping of courtyard.
3. <i>Lohari</i> (the youngest son's wife is the junior-most)	Cooking of food only, but the menu must be approved by the <i>Jethi</i> .

Each woman in the family performs her duty regularly and punctually without any grudge.

It is said that formerly Tharu women did not allow their menfolk enter into their kitchen and touch their water pots but such restrictions on men have now been relaxed and have almost been given up. The hold of Tharu women on their menfolk lies in the fact that they still have the right to divorce their husbands and exercise it more often than men do, because a divorced man is not sure of getting another wife for himself without incurring a heavy expenditure on compensation.

Apart from the restrictions during menstruation, pregnancy and child birth, Tharu women are not allowed to perform any religious worship or to offer sacrifices to gods and goddesses or to take the role of a *Bharara*. The old belief that their women used to have the power of witchcraft and sorcery, is now believed to be a false myth. All these

taboos and restrictions have not lowered the dominant position of Tharu women.

Kinship Organization

On the basis of genealogies of the Tharus an attempt has been made to give the kinship terminology in the following table which has been arranged according to the generation and the sex of the person addressing. This table gives us an idea of the kinship terminology of the Tharus as it exists today. The kinship terms have been given upto third generation, that is, grandfather's generation, as the Tharus seldom remember the names of their great grandfather. Only Sadhu Ram of Bawanpuri could tell us the name of his great-grandfather who was Jhar Deo, Kansa.

TABLE XIX

The system of Kinship among the Tharus.

Sl. No.	Description of persons	Relationship in Tharu dialect.	
		Male speaking	Female speaking
1	Father's father	Dado	Dado
2	Father's father's brother	Dado	Dado
3	Mother's father	Nana	Nana
4	Mother's father's brother	Nana	Nana
5	Father's maternal uncle	Dado	Dado
6	Mother's maternal uncle	Nana	Nana
7	Father's father's maternal uncle's son	Dado	Dado
8	Mother's father's maternal uncle's son	Nana	Nana
9	Father's father's paternal aunt's son	Dado	Dado
10	Mother's father's paternal aunt's son	Nana	Nana

The system of kinship among the Tharus.

Sl. No.	Description of persons	Relationship in Tharu dialect	
		Male speaking	Female speaking
11	Spouse's mother's father	Dado	Dado
12	Spouse's father's father	Dado	Dado
13	Father's father's sister's husband	Dado	Dado
14	Mother's father's sister's husband	Nana	Nana
15	Father's mother	Dadi	Dadi
16	Mother's mother	Nani	Nani
17	Mother's mother's sister	Nani	Nani
18	Father's mother's sister	Dadi	Dadi
19	Father's maternal aunt	Dadi	Dadi
20	Father's father's maternal uncle's daughter	Dadi	Dadi
21	Mother's father's maternal uncle's daughter	Nani	Nani
22	Father's father's paternal aunt's daughter	Dadi	Dadi
23	Mother's father's paternal aunt's daughter	Nani	Nani
24	Father's father's sister	Dadi	Dadi
25	Mother's father's sister	Nani	Nani
26	Spouse's father's mother	Dadi	Dadi
27	Spouse's mother's mother	Nani	Nani
<i>Generation Next Above the Speaker</i>			
28	Father	Dauwa	Dauwa (Abba)
29	Father's brother (a) Elder (b) Younger	Bhai Kakku	Bhai Kakku
30	Mother's sister's husband	Mausa	Mausa
31	Mother's brother	Muma	Muma
32	Spouse's father	Buba	Buba
33	Spouse's maternal uncle	Mumaho	Mumaho
34	Brother's or sister's father-in-law	Bubaho	Bubaho
35	Father's sister's husband	Phupha	Phupha
36	Step-father	Kakku	Kakku
37	Mother	Aiya	Aiya (Amma)

The system of kinship among the Tharus

Sl. No.	Description of persons	Relationship in Tharu dialect	
		Male speaking	Female speaking
38	Mother's sister (Elder sister)	Bari	Bari
		Mausi	Mausi
39	Father's brother's wife (Elder)	Amma	Amma
	(Younger)	Kaki	Kaki
40	Step-mother	Kaki	Kaki
41	Father's sister	Phua	Phua
42	Mother's brother's wife	Manyi	Manyi
43	Spouse's mother	Manyi	Manyi
44	Spouse's paternal aunt	Kaki	Kaki
<i>Speaker's Own Generation</i>			
45	Brother (Elder)	Dada	Dada
46	(Younger)	Bhaiya	Bhaiya
47	Father's brother's son	Same as in 46	
48	Mother's sister's son		
49	Father's sister's son		
50	Mother's brother's son		
51	Father's sister's daughter's husband. Elder, younger	...	Jija
52	Mother's brother's daughter's husband	Jija	Jija
53	Spouse's sister's husband	Sadhhu	Jija
54	Spouse's elder brother	Jethar	Bare
55	Spouse's younger brother	Sala	Dewar
56	Elder sister's husband	Jija	Jija
57	Younger sister's husband	Lala	Lala
58	Spouse	...	...
59	Father-in-law of son or daughter	Buba	Buba
60	Sister (Elder)	Didi	Didi
	(Younger)	Lalo	Lalo
61	Father's brother's daughter	Same as in 60	
62	Mother's sister's daughter		
63	Father's sister's daughter		
64	Mother's brother's daughter		
65	Father's sister's son's wife	Bhai	Bahu
		Bahu	

The system of kinship among the Tharus.

Sl. No.	Description of persons	Relationship in Tharu dialect	
		Male speaking	Femal speaking
66	Mother's brother's son's wife	Bhai Bahu	Bhai Bahu
67	Spouse's elder brother's wife	Thaku-rayan ho	Lohari
68	Spouse's younger brother's wife	Lohari	Lohari
69	Spouse's elder sister	Bari	Jiji
70	Spouse's younger brother	Lala	Dewar
71	Elder brother's wife	Bhauji	Bhauji
72	Younger brother's wife	Lohari	Lohari
73	Mother-in-law of son or daughter	Samadhan	Samadhan
<i>Generation Next Below the Speaker</i>			
74	Son	Lala	Lala
75	Brother's son	Lala	Lala
76	Spouse's sister's son	Lala	Lala
77	Maternal uncle's daughter's son	Bhanej	Bhanej
78	Paternal aunt's daughter's son	"	Lala
79	(a) Elder sister's son	"	"
	(b) Younger sister's son	"	"
80	Spouse's brother's son	Lala	"
81	Maternal uncle's son's son	"	"
82	Paternal aunt's son's son	"	"
83	Son-in-law	Lalaho	Lalaho
84	Brother's daughter's husband	"	"
85	Sister's daughter's husband	"	"
86	Daughter	Lalo	Lalo
87	Brother's daughter	"	"
88	Maternal uncle's daughter's daughter	"	"
89	Paternal uncles's daughter's daughter	"	"
90	Maternal uncle's son's daughter	"	"
91	Paternal aunt's son's daughter	"	"
92	(a) Elder sister's daughter	"	"
	(b) Younger sister's daughter	"	"
93	Spouse's brother's daughter	"	"
94	Spouse's sister's daughter	"	"

The system of kinship among the Tharus

Sl. No.	Description of persons	Relationship in Tharu dialect.	
		Male speaking	Female speaking
95	Son's wife	Bahu	Bahu
96	Sister's son's wife	"	"
97	Brother's son's wife	"	"
<i>Third Generation Below the Speaker</i>			
98	Son's son	Nati	Nati
99	Daughter's son	Dhewato	Dhewato
100	Brother's son's son	Nati	Nati
101	Brother's daughter's son	Dhewato	Dhewato
102	Sister's son's son	Nati	Nati
103	Sister's daughter's son	Dhewato	Dhewato
104	Son's daughter	Natan	Natan
105	Daughter's daughter	Dhewtan	Dhewtan
106	Brother's son's daughter	Natan	Natan
107	Brother's daughter's daughter	Dhewtan	Dhewtan
108	Sister's son's daughter	"	"
109	Sister's daughter's daughter	"	"
110	Son's son's wife	Natan- Bahu	Natan Bahu
111	Daughter's son's wife	Dhewtan Bahu	Dhewta Bahu

From the above table it is obvious that the relationship system among the Tharus is neither fully descriptive nor wholly classificatory, because the same kinship term is used for several relatives of the same generation and sex and at the same time, some terms denote only one kinship.

The term *dado* is used for father's father, father's father's brother, father's maternal uncle, father's father's maternal uncle's son, father's father's paternal aunt's son, spouse's mother's father, spouse's father's father, father's father's sister husband.

Dadi is used for father's mother, father's mother's sister, father's maternal aunt, father's father's maternal uncle's daughter, father's father's paternal aunt's daughter, father's father's sister, spouse's father's mother.

Similarly, the term *nana* is used for mother's father's, mother's father's brother, mother's maternal uncle, mother's father's maternal uncle's son, mother's father's paternal aunt's son, mother's father's sister's husband.

Nani stands for mother's mother, mother's mother's sister, mother's father's maternal uncle's daughter, mother's father's paternal aunt's daughter, mother's father's sister, spouse's mother's mother.

Dada is a term used for brother, father's brother's son, mother's sister's son, father's sister's son, mother's brother's son. The term simply denotes how an elder brother should be addressed. The younger brother is either called by his name or by the term *bhaiya*.

Didi is used for elder sister, father's brother's daughter, mother's sister's daughter, father's sister's daughter, mother's brother's daughter; while younger sister is generally addressed by her name or is called *lalo*, a term of endearment which is frequently used for young girls.

The term *lala* is used to address one's own son and also his brother's son, spouse's sister's son, spouse's brother's son, maternal uncle's son's son, paternal aunt's son's son, but the same term *lala* is used by Tharu women to denote maternal uncle's daughter's son, elder and younger, sister's son, spouse's brother's son, maternal uncle's son's son, paternal aunt's son's son.

A corresponding term *lali* stands for one's own daughter, maternal uncle's daughter's daughter, paternal uncle's daughter's daughter, maternal uncle's son's daughter, paternal aunt's son's son's daughter, sister's daughter, spouse's brother's and sister's daughter.

The term *lalaho* or *damado* is used for one's son-in law, brother's daughter's husband, sister's daughter's husband.

The term *bahu* is used for one's daughter-in-law, brother's son's wife, sister's son's wife.

The term *nati* is used to denote one's grandson but it also stands for brother's son's son, sister's son's son.

Natan stands for son's daughter, brother's son's daughter.

The term *dhewato* is used for daughter's son, brother's daughter's son, sister's daughter's son.

Dhewtan stands for daughter's daughter, brother's daughter's daughter, sister's son's daughter, sister's daughter's daughter.

Some kinship terms stand for only one relationship. For instance, *aiya* is used for mother only, aunt is addressed as *kaki*, but the elder aunt is called *amma*. Similarly, *dauwa* or *abba* stands for father only. The term *bhai* and *kakku* are used for father's elder and younger brothers respectively.

Thus we find that the kinship terminology of the Tharus has important characteristics of classificatory system, though occasionally we do find some examples of descriptive system as well.

It is obvious that one group of relationship consists of those related by blood, that is, father, brother or son, mother, sister or daughter, and that the second group comprises of those related by marriage and are addressed as father-in-law, brother-in-law, mother-in-law or daughter-in-law. In the first group inter-marriage is tabooed, while the second group not only includes wife's relatives but members of other families from which mates may be selected.

Relative age and seniority claim much respect and play an important part in the choice of the terms of address. No Tharu will ever call his or her elders by name, but in addressing the younger persons either their names or kinship terms may be used. Moreover, the kinship terms used among the relatives of the same generation are never reciprocal, because the younger person cannot use the same term which is used by his or her elders in addressing.

The Tharus have also adopted certain kinship terms of the Hindus and Muslims. The Hindu kinship terms, such as, *amma*, *jija*, *sadhu*, *samadhi* and *kakku* are quite common among these people. In place of *dauwa* they are using *abba*, a Muslim term for father.

Rules of Mutual Avoidance

Avoidance rules among the Tharus taboo close contact among certain relatives. Marriage or sexual relationship is strictly prohibited among them. First set of such taboos of mutual avoidance is laid down between a man and wives of

his real and classificatory younger brothers and likewise between a woman and her husband's elder brothers. This taboo forbids a personal and direct contact for these relatives, except that when an occasion arises they must talk to each other in the third person. The woman may serve her husband's elder brother food or water, but this must be done with an expression of due respect for him. Since these rules are strictly enforced and their breaches are heavily punished by a fine or excommunication or both, as the case may be, there are rare cases where a man has broken them. Mulli of Nadura, for instance, ran away with his younger brother's wife to Nepal. His brother and father could not trace the couple. For fear of excommunication Mulli did not return home for six months. By chance, Bhaggamal of Naugamanath Bisaunta happened to go to Nepal where he met Mulli and his wife and persuaded them to come back to their village. First Mulli hesitated but after being assured of Bhaggamal's help he accompanied him with his wife to Bhaggamal's village, Naugamanath Bisaunta. There he stayed for six months only, for his parents and brother did not allow him to come back to their village for fear of the social stigma on the family. In the end, Mulli paid five hundred rupees to his younger brother as a penalty including compensation and then only he was allowed to settle down in Sripur Bichawa with his wife.

The second set of avoidance rules taboos, the relationship of a man with the elder sisters of his wife and of a woman with the husbands of her younger sisters. In fact, a Tharu male has to respect the elder sisters of his wife, both real and classificatory, and a woman has to do the same. Both of them are not allowed to joke or jest with each other. They are required to maintain a reasonable distance between themselves. For all practical purposes, the rules are not rigid, yet a kind of vigilance is maintained in these relationships.

In all the cases of behaviour towards these relatives it is a matter of conventional etiquette so that they are not offended, disrespected or insulted.

Joking Relationship

Along with the restrictions detailed above, certain degree of familiarity, privilege of joking, use of violently abusive language are permitted among certain relatives in the Tharu community. The social custom of the Tharus allows joking relationship, firstly, between a man and his wife's younger brothers and sisters; and between a woman and her husband's younger brothers and sisters. Secondly, a man may also indulge in jest and banter and may crack jokes, which would otherwise be considered obscene, with his elder brother's wife and her younger sisters and brothers. Similarly, a woman can joke with her elder sister's husbands and their brothers and sisters. The custom of privileged familiarity between *dewar* and *bhauji* is frequently referred to in the folk literature of the Tharus. The parents-in-law of a husband and those of his wife can also exchange simple jokes. A woman being more privileged in the Tharu community is not bound by many restrictive morals, and even sexual intimacy between such relatives as parents-in-law and *dewar* and *bhauji* may not create much alarm and may not produce any consternation in the society. No such liberty is allowed between grandparents and grandchildren.

In all the above joking relationships, the relatives of opposite sex who are permitted to joke with each other by the custom and convention, can marry. The Tharus practice junior levirate as well as sororate. Marriage between parents-in-law of a husband and those of his wife is very rare, though it is permissible by tribal custom.

Rules of Etiquette

The Tharus do not have many rules of etiquette but they do observe courteous behaviour towards their elders and certain relatives. The rules of addressing by their proper names, eating and removing of the leavings of food from the plates and manners of greeting are closely related to the kinship structure of the Tharus.



Plate No. 21. Two women greeting each other in their traditional style.

A Tharu male will not address by their proper names his father, mother, grandparents, uncles, aunts, father-in-law, mother-in-law and elder brothers and elder sister-in-law. A woman will not call her father, mother, father-in-law, mother-in-law, husband's elder brothers and their wives by their names. Husband and wife do not address each other by name, nor do they have any mutual and reciprocal term of address. If the husband wants to call his wife, he will address her as the mother of his son or daughter; on her side she will refer to her husband as the father of her son or daughter. They sometimes also address each other as *manjhala* or *manjhali*, *lohora* or *lohari*, as the case may be—a term which is given to him or her on the basis of his or her seniority or juniority in the same family.

The Tharus usually eat their meal in individual plates. Whatever is left over in a plate is called *jutha*. There are certain rules and regulations about eating *jutha* of each other's plates and cleaning them. A man may eat the *jutha* of his parents, uncles, elder brothers and sisters, but he will not eat the leavings of his wife, his elder brother's wife, younger brothers and their wives, younger sisters, his parents-in-law, elder or younger brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law. A woman can eat the *jutha* of her parents, uncles, aunts, brothers and their wives, her husband, parents-in-law, but she will avoid the leaving of her husband's elder brothers and elder sisters. The maternal uncle does not take meal with his nephew for the fear of taking his *jutha*, because in that case he will have to compensate it with a cow or a buffalo to his nephew.

Usually, womenfolk clean the plates of all the members of the family except that the daughter-in-law is not allowed to wash the plate of her *kaki* (father-in-law's brother's wife). In case she does so, *kaki* will have to give a small ornament or some money for this service.

The rules for salutation and greeting each other are regulated according to kinship usages. When a son returns home he will say *Ram Ram*, but now due to the Hindu influence he also touches his father's feet. The father in turn will say

'long live my son' or 'be happy', or 'get strong and healthy.' A man will follow the same rule when he meets his mother, uncles, elder brothers, elder sisters, father-in-law, mother-in-law, and elder sisters and brother-in-law, but in no case he will touch the feet of his relatives on the wife's side. A woman, on the other hand, will not touch the feet of her father, mother, elder brothers and their wives and elder sisters but greet them by saying *Ram Ram* and in return will be greeted similarly. In her husband's home, she bows and stoops with her folded hands at the feet of her parents-in-law, elder brothers of her husband and their wives and elder sisters. When two women meet, they first stand facing each other, then one makes the slight nod of her head on one side which is returned by the other by a similar nod on the same side of her body but looking as an opposite nod. This is repeated twice to cover both the sides and then both of them simultaneously bend low with folded hands. When two friends meet, they embrace each other saying '*dilawar Ram Ram*'. During the Holi festival men greet each other saying '*Ram Ram*' with an embrace. At their drinks they also greet with *Jai Ram* or *Ram Ram*.

Ritual Friendship

Besides the relationship by blood and marriage, the Tharus have devised an artificial form of relationship by which two persons may enter into a sacred bond of friendship. Such ties of friendship are more enduring than those of marriage and blood. The relationship of a friend, the Tharus believe, is the most sacred and binding of all earthly ties. Therefore, a friend in their community enjoys a higher and more esteemed position than their kith and kin. A popular saying among them illustrates this fact very well.

Mit na chhutai chahe chhutai sago bhay

(one may leave one's brother but not one's friend)

What is true of the Tharus about this bond of friendship is also true of other aboriginal tribes, such as, Gonds, Baigas, Kharias and the Oraons. All these have a highly developed



Plate No. 22. "One may leave one's sister but not one's friend"

theory and organisation of friendship. An amazing fact about friendship tie among the Tharus is that it is not contracted only between one Tharu and another Tharu but it is also formed between a Tharu and a non-Tharu after a thorough test and exchange of mutual confidence. We cannot definitely say how and when such friendship starts, but one thing is certain that when a Tharu finds a friend, he must know him through and through. The two friends call each other *dilawar* but if they happen to have identical names they address each other as *mit*. Women also contract friendship of this kind among themselves and each friend calls the other only by the name *sangan*.

The friendship is confirmed only after a ceremonial exchange of presents. A detailed description of the manner in which friendship alliances are entered will not be out of place here.

Two would-be friends, first of all, fix a particular day for the ceremony either on some important occasion like engagement or marriage or any other day. On that particular day, one *dilawar* accompanied by some of his relatives goes to his friend's village where all the relatives assemble at his friend's place. The two friends exchange the gifts of a new suit of clothes, some sweets and one rupee and annas four as a cash present for the ritual. Each one helps the other to put on the clothes just presented. After that the friend's companions and other guests are entertained at a sumptuous feast and drink. Sometimes dances are also arranged on this occasion.

Next morning, the *dilawar* with his party takes leave of his new friend. The other *dilawar* also holds a similar function at his place. Tharu women also celebrate their ritual of friendship in the same manner.

It is absolutely necessary that the *dilawar* or the *sangan*, as the case may be, must be consulted on every important occasion and affair of each other's family. A *dilawar* becomes not only an important member of his friend's family but the two friends absolutely trust each other and stick closer than two brothers. When a *dilawar* is initiated into his

friend's family, he uses similar kinship terms in addressing the elders and youngsters and along with them he shares the same privileges and responsibilities. At the sowing or harvesting season, if he happens to visit his friend's place, he must go to the fields to help him in his work just like any one of the members of family. If this friendship for any reason breaks down, both the friends for ever lose respect of their own community. They are never trusted by their kinsmen and relatives, because they believe that if they have deceived their own friends, they cannot be true and faithful to any one else.

The Tharus, it appears, have broken down the rigid barriers of tribal exclusiveness and have tried to secure utmost social integration by devising an artificial bond of friendship not only in their own community but outside it with their neighbours. However, friends are not chosen from the lower castes for fear of lowering their social ranks.

Rank and Authority.

It is interesting to note the nature of rank and authority among the Tharus. Without going into the vain quest for origins we find that the social ranking that obtains among the Tharus today is clearly the result of Hindu impact. The two distinct castes, as we have seen, are the Rana Thakurs and the Thakurs, the latter divided into various other sections. The Rana Thakurs who constitute by far the largest group of the population are clearly recognised as a higher caste. They are, as we have seen, a homogeneous group. Among the Thakurs, however, there is neither this homogeneity nor any indication of any caste gradation as such, each section claiming superiority over the other.

The emergence of classes based on unequal ownership of productive resources, that is, agriculture, is of recent occurrence in the socio-economic life of the Tharus, and has resulted from a change over from moneyless economy to a transitional phase of money economy. Thus we find quite a few substantial farmers, a class of hereditary wealthy village *Padhans* and *Mustajars* on the one hand, and a class of poor

agriculturists and landless labourers on the other. Between these two extremes of the wealthy and the poor, we find some people employed in the Government services. But this class of Government servants is not completely divorced from its primary occupation, agriculture. In fact, this class has not been able to exert its economic pressure, for almost all of them still look to agriculture as their last resort of sustenance and depend upon it even during their period of active service partly, if not wholly.

One can safely put this group in the category of middle class. Therefore, in the Tharu social structure the hereditary village *Padhans*, *Mustajars* and substantial cultivators can be said to belong to the upper class, the Government servants to the middle and the landless labourers and tenants to the lower class. In recent years with the introduction of money economy, education and Government service there has been a considerable change from an acquired to achieved status among these classes.

No doubt, the concept of this mobility was not altogether absent in their social organization. Individuals belonging to either of these groups could attain certain social status and prestige which was simply acquired by them by their own labour and efficiency. In spite of some differences in their acquired status there was in the past a great emphasis on the individual achievements. For instance, the roles of a magician, dancer, musician, dispute-settler and mediator could be acquired by any Tharu. The possibility of social mobility has been a great factor for greater changes in his social status.

Individuals on the merit of high intelligence and knowledge and reputation for good character, bravery and valour in hunting, talent for singing and dancing, knowledge of magic and skill in wood-carving, basketry and net-making enjoy a peculiar social status of their own above the average men in the society. Thus men like Bhaggamal of Naugamanath Bisaunta and Chanadan of Jamaur patiya for their magical skill; Lachhman of Khetasanda Khan for dancing; Madan Singh of Barkidandi for singing, Bambal of Rampura for inexhaustible stock of legends and ballads; Ganga Ram of Sunkheri for hunting; Hari Singh and Bairagi Singh of Naku-

liya for their ability for conducting affairs of the tribal council; Karn Singh of Kuakhera for his progressive views; Palta of Rampura for his beautiful wood-carving, have earned social distinction, prestige and honour in their community because of their personal attainments.

The Panchayat (Tribal Council)

The Tharus do not have a common authority over their whole community. The *Panchayat* is the only powerful tribunal for settling numerous disputes of their community. There is no permanent tribal council or *Panchayat* as such, because on each occasion it is formed of the representatives of both the contending parties with a *Sarpanch* who is supposed to be an impartial individual. We have already seen in a number of instances that the decisions of the *Panchayat* are binding on the parties concerned. With the enforcement of Gaon Panchayat Act of Uttar Pradesh, some of the disputes are also decided by the *Gaon Adalat* (village courts) but the tribal *Panchayat* is still recognised as the custodian of law and morals.

The *Panchayat*, when it is convened to deal with any dispute follows the tribal customs and conventions in its procedure. It begins with hearing of the case, examines the evidences of the disputing parties, considers the pleas taken by them and finally forms its judgment. Then the *Sarpanch* in consultation with the members of the *Panchayat* declares the final sentence on the offender in the form of a fine, excommunication or purification and penalty feast, as the case may be. Due to the spread of education, the proceedings of the case which were not placed on record are now recorded in writing. Because of the contact with the Hindus, the method of purification practised by the Tharus in taking an excommunicated person back to their community is done by performing a *katha* ceremony and a tribal feast. The cases brought before the *Panchayat* are as follows :—

1. Partition of joint property, succession and inheritance.
2. The taboos, such as, sexual union of a Tharu with a non-Tharu, marriage or sexual intrigue within the prohibited degree.

3. The taboo of marrying another man's wife without his consent and without paying off the compensation demanded by the former husband.
4. The breaking off the engagement of a boy with a girl without any reason.
5. The taking of forbidden food and eating at the hands of lower castes and tribes.
6. The taboos of killing accidentally or intentionally of a cow, calf or a bullock.

Social Reform Movements

To reach the goal of assimilation within the Kshatriya caste the Tharus, particularly, the Rana Thakur group are actively striving for directing a change in their socio-cultural order of the community. This, of course, may be taken as a most striking manifestation of acculturative processes with the Hindus. The social reformers are working very hard through their tribal councils, *Panchayats* and are motivating the rank and file with the idea of attaining a higher social status equal to the second in order, i.e. that of the Kshatriya in the Hindu social hierarchal order. Now they are employing 'positive' and 'negative' means to achieve a prescribed code of behaviour for their group in order to equip it with high caste values and to clean it from the so-called traditionalistic, tribal, primitive and uncivilised values may be seen in the development of the entire Social Reform Movement.

In the year 1930, the Social Reform Movement which is popularly known as *Jati Sudhar* (Reforms in caste) among the Tharus was initiated by a handful of educated Tharus. This movement has since passed through two definite stages. At the first stage, it aimed at destroying some of the old traditions and customs ; and at the second, more emphasis was laid on some of the aspects of social life and the whole movement was confined to these. The obvious reason of this change in the second phase was that it was realised by all the leaders of this movement that the initial mistake which the earlier reformers made was to make their plan very ambitious. It seems, as it will be made clear later, that they wanted to rectify this mis-

take and at the same time they tried to take advantage of the new uprising in the lower caste people after India's Independence in 1947. Thus the second stage of this movement really started after 1948, although its seeds were already sown during the year 1947—48. During my first field trip in March 1948, I did not find any activity which I could call a movement, although people were certainly conscious of all their rights and claims. There were all kinds of stories about the first stage of this movement. Most of them were not favourable, not because the Tharus did not like the movement but because they seemed to have lost faith in the leadership of the 1930 movement. And in a way it was carried through for quite a long time, say fifteen years in an inconsistent manner. Therefore, the wounds were still not dried or healed up and the majority of people were very skeptical about any movement of this type. But a new wave of consciousness prevailed on these simple folks just after Independence which brought the whole country on a new level of prestige and status. There was another psychological reason involved in this process. The underprivileged or people of lower social status could hope that the New Democratic India shall now listen to their claim of belonging to a higher social status much more patiently.

In order to have a comparative picture of these two stages of the Social Reform Movement it will be highly desirable to look into the categories of social reforms. Therefore, let us see what type of new social order is envisaged by the leaders of 1930's movement who drew up the rules and accompanying penalties in case of violation of these as given in Table XX.

TABLE XX

Rules and Penalties of Social Reform Council

No.	Rules	Penalties
E=Ex-Communication. F=Fine of Rs. 25/-.		
1.	Poultry raising totally prohibited	F
2.	Sharing of <i>hukka</i> with the lower sections totally forbidden.	E
3.	Eating of pork forbidden.	E
4.	No marriage alliance with a Non-Tharu.	E
5.	At various ceremonies connected with birth, engagement, marriage and death, sweets to be served to guests instead of liquor and meat.	F
6.	The bride's and the bridegroom's parents never to enter into any transaction of money or feast as a condition precedent to engagement.	F
7.	The bride's father not to break the engagement without reasonable grounds.	F
8.	The Tharus not to sell their daughter to any one offering a handsome amount of money.	E
9.	The Tharus not to demand any bride price from the bridegroom's family. If the bride's father is too poor to afford the expenses of feasting etc., the bridegroom's father to arrange for them.	F
10.	The wife not to divorce her healthy husband.	E
11.	On a wife's divorce of her husband because of his impotence, the husband to claim only half of the usual rate of compensation ; the wife to give a year's grace to her husband after his recovery from the treatment ; the husband to receive full amount of compensation in case of divorce again but the husband not to receive anything on his voluntary divorce of his wife.	E
12.	The compensation for a divorced woman to be paid to the former husband or his family from Rs. 200 to Rs. 400 ; in case of a widow remarriage the rate varies between Rs. 100 to Rs. 150.	F

Rules and Penalties of Social Reform Council

No.	Rules	Penalties
E=Ex-Communication. F=Fine of Rs. 25/-.		
13.	Women not to move freely in the markets and fairs ; not to smoke or chew betels and rub oil over their bodies at public places.	F
14.	Women in their menstrual period never to enter into the kitchen or cook meals.	E
15.	The Tharus not to sell cows or bullocks to the Muslims (for fear of slaughter).	E
16.	The Tharus not to purchase meat from the Muslims nor to get their hair cropped by Muslim barbers.	F
17.	The Tharus to have sacred thread ceremony in their marriage.	E
18.	All the disputes to be settled by the <i>Panchayat</i> ; no one to approach the Police or State authorities for redress of one's grievances.	E

From the above list of rules and penalties, it is clear that the Tharus were deliberately attempting to root out many of their aboriginal practices from their social life so that their claim of identifying themselves with the high caste Hindus may be justified from all points of view. The reforms like prohibiting of poultry raising, eating of pork and offering of meat and liquor during all ceremonies, rules regarding divorce and social commensality and finally insisting on wearing a sacred thread simply express their ardent desire to adopt some of the Hindu customs, ways of life and indicate the processes of directed culture change.

How these reforms were propagated by the leaders of this movement is a very interesting story and shows how the Tharus reacted to these new ideas. The method of propagating these new ideas and practices as adopted by the leaders of Social Reform Movement was through open air lectures to the people, both old and young, who were collected outside their villages. The leaders, after instructing, asked them to

go back to their respective villages to teach the rest of their community and to convince the value of these reforms. Thus the leaders propagated these rules all over the Tharu country. These elaborate rules and regulations were at first received with caution and suspicion. But through the persistent efforts of these enthusiastic social reformers, a sort of consciousness was created. A lot of money was realised through the fines from the violators of these rules, though sometimes even the leaders did not rigidly follow them. But they could not be fined when they broke these rules as it would have led to the disruption in their organisation itself. The result was that the rank and file suffered at the hands of the reformers and paid heavy fines imposed on them. Money thus collected was not utilised for any constructive purposes and for the betterment of the people. On the other hand, it served to swell the private purses of these reformers. Consequently, the movement became ineffective and the dinning noise of these leaders lost its effect upon the listeners who still adhered to their old traditions and customs. The impression left upon the people was that the new reformers were not only advanced in their views but they were also not honest in their designs.

After this, the movement remained moribund for some time until some of the local leaders again appeared in different parts of the Tharu country and revived the old reform movement in the year 1948 and gave it in a new lease of life by confining their attention this time to a limited number of reforms relating only to their socio-religious life. During the respite, a kind of awakening and general consciousness had also begun to dawn through the natural process of culture contact with the Hindus and other peoples. So, the social atmosphere during this period gave birth to a new mood of receptivity. Therefore, more people grasped the new-fangled ideas with a greater response than what they showed in 1930, and the next movement manifested itself in the following code of social form of conduct popularly known as *Sisodia Niyam*, which is as follows :—

1. "We, the inhabitants of the Tharu villages, will act according to the rules framed by the members of

Jati Sudhar Sabha

2. Every village has elected four *Panchas* (leaders) and one *Sarpanch* (Head of the Council). Only these leaders will have the right to decide their disputes.
3. In case the people of a village do not abide by the decision taken by the *Panchayat* (Council) they may refer the matter to the general council, a representative body of all the villages.

Rules for Cleanliness

1. Women must clean their hearths and put on clean clothes before cooking their meals. They must not enter the kitchen during the menstruation period.
2. All rubbish of the house and refuse of the cattle must be thrown in a ditch outside the village or in fields and not on the path.

Rules for Ceremonies

1. During the *Chhathi*¹ ceremony the Tharus must invite the Brahmins to perform the name-giving ceremony.
2. The Brahmin must be invited to perform the marriage ceremony according to the Hindu rites and rituals.
3. No Tharu should observe the *Barshi*² ceremony during the Diwali. The Brahmin must be called to perform the funeral rites.

Rules for Economy

1. No liquor and meat to be served at any ceremony.
 2. In case the father of the girl breaks up the engagement of his daughter with the boy to whom she
-
1. Sixth day after childbirth when the Tharu observe purification ceremony.
 2. On Diwali night, which is the Festival of Light among the Hindus, the Tharus observe the ceremony of calling home the spirits of the dead.

is engaged and vice versa, each of them should pay a fine of Rs. 50/-.

Rules for Prestige

1. Women must not visit the market places. If they are found there, their husbands must pay a fine of Rs. 25/-.
2. They must cook their food at some clean places during the Ramlila and Janma Ashtami fairs.

A few of these rules and regulations are being enthusiastically observed by some of the educated Tharus. For instance, the practice of raising fowls is being given up specially by the more advanced inhabitants of Khatima Tahsil. But at the same time, some of the reforms are completely disregarded and mutilated, while others are skewed to new and anomalous uses. A reaction had again set in, when the leaders themselves did not adhere to some of these rules which they had framed for their society; and they relapsed into their old habits of drinking and meat-eating during various ceremonies. This time again the Tharus had suffered at the hands of the social reformers. The rules, such as, invitation to the Brahmins by the Tharus, or total abandonment of poultry raising, proved to be too costly for them. The most important factor which led to the failure of the reform movements was that there was no central authority to guide, direct, co-ordinate or control them. Taking advantage of such a situation, unscrupulous persons in the garb of reformers exploited the movements for their selfish interest. Thus the movements have now almost lost their force, because the socio-religious motive alone was not sufficient to keep them alive as popular movements. The failure of these movements led to disillusionment and cynicism. The Tharus once again reverted to their old habit of drinking not only because it gave them stimulation but it also pleased their gods and goddesses.

Here it can be pointed out that many of these reforms have come in direct conflict with the material and religious needs of the Tharus. Perhaps they do not seem to have

developed such a kind of social structure which might absorb these reforms all at once.

Thus it may be concluded that if they have not accepted an overall change in their customs and practices as preached by the social reformers, they have certainly acculturated to so many ideas, rites and rituals of the people they have been in contact with for so many years.

VI

MENSTRUATION, PREGNANCY, BIRTH AND MATERNITY

The knowledge of menstruation, pregnancy and birth has increased among the Tharus and their attitude towards these has also changed with the diffusion of general education and ideas imported from the more advanced communities. But even today one can meet people who do not have any definite ideas about the phenomena of menstruation, pregnancy and child birth. They can neither account for the periodicity of menstruation nor do they know much about the causation and conception of life. According to them these problems defy all human comprehension. This gross ignorance of sexual science can be well illustrated in the words of a Tharu, *Ram ki lila Ramai jane* (it is only God who knows His plans). But the cessation of menstruation is always attributed by them to pregnancy, because this phenomenon is actually seen and experienced by them.

Menarche Among The Tharus

Most of the primitive people have a horror of menstrual blood but the Tharus believe that menstruation is no more than a fact in the ordinary course of nature. A correct appraisal of the menarcheal age among Indian girls in general and Tharu girls in particular is a very difficult task indeed, partly because they have only a vague notion about such an important biological event of their own lives and partly because no significant data is available on the subject. Only a few authorities like Robertson, Webb, Curjel, Elwin, Majumdar and more

recently, a student of the Calcutta University, Miss Sen and Mrs. Parukutty of Travancore have collected some statistics about the age of menarche in Indian girls. Robertson¹ who was the first person to study this problem among the Hindus in 1845 found 12 years 4 months as the average age for menstruation in Hindu women of Calcutta, 13 years 2 months in Bangalore, and 13 years 3 months in Bombay. Webb² writing about the same time came to the conclusion that the Hindu girls rarely menstruated before the age of 12 and that they did not mature much earlier than Europeans. Curjel³ provided another set of data drawn from different parts of India and found 13.6 years as an average age of menarche for all the communities. In 1929 the Age of Consent Committee after examining 1,752 cases published the figures that 80% of the Indian girls belonging to different races get their first menstruation between 12 to 15 (the average age being 12).⁴ Elwin⁵ investigated fifty cases in Patan and its neighbourhood. His observation corresponds with the results of the Age of Consent Committee. D. N. Majumdar⁶ has carried out investigations among seven tribes of northern India, namely, the Hos, the Korwas, the Tharus, the Mundas, the Saoras, the Kukis, the Garos and the Cheros to find out the age of menarche. In 78.40% cases, according to Majumdar, the ages at the menarche among the tribal girls were between 10 to 14, com-

1. J. Robertson, 'On the Period of Puberty in Hindu Women', Ed. Medical and Surgical Journal, 1845, pp. 64, 156.
2. Allan Webb, 'Pathologica Indica', 1848. See also Leicester's paper on 'Menstruation in Europeans and East Indians in India', in the Journal Obst. and Gyn. British Empire 1910, p. 414.
3. D. F. Curjel, 'The Reproductive Life of Indian Women', Indian Journal of Medicine Res. 8, 1920.

His figures are.

Hindus	(268)—13.62	+ 0.11 years
Muslims	(140)—13.64	+ 0.16 "
Christians	(81)—13.69	+ 0.17 "
Combined average	(489)—13.64	years
College girls	(56)—13.88	+ .21 years.

4. Report of the Age of Consent Committee, 1929, p. 337.
5. Verrier Elwin, 'Primitive Ideas of Menstruation and Climacteric in the East Central Provinces in India', Essays in Anthropology, 1942, p. 141.
6. D. N. Majumdar, 'The Matrix of Indian Culture', p. 79.

pared with 92.% among girls of all races in India. "The tribal girls, therefore", he concludes, "have their menarche later than other girls, though in about 3% cases it appeared much earlier than 10. Considering the fact that age computation among the tribal people cannot be taken to be accurate, a shifting of the age group 10 and below may increase the percentage in the next age grade. The high percentage of women in the age grade 14 and above compared to that arrived at by the Age of Consent Committee marks the real difference between the two samples. Another significant fact is the early age of menarche among the Mongoloid tribes, the Garos, the Kukis and the Tharus, which distinguish them from the Australoid or pre-Dravidian tribes like the Hos, the Mundas and others."¹

Recently very interesting data were collected by Miss Tulika Sen in Calcutta and Mrs. Parukutty Baruch in Travancore with a view to find out the present menarcheal age of Bengali and Nayar girls respectively. S.S. Sarkar under whose guidance and instance these investigations were carried on has testified the validity and reliability of the data in his Presidential Address to Anthropology section of Indian Science Congress Session held at Bangalore, 1951. The figures obtained by Miss Sen and Mrs. Parukutty are as follows :—

TABLE XXI

Table Showing Menarcheal Age of Girls in Bengal and Travancore.

		Average at menarche in years		
		Mean	S.E.	S.D.
Calcutta Brahmins	(153)	12.70	+ 0.10	1.28
„ Vaidyas	(275)	12.70	+ 0.08	1.38
„ Kayasthas	(219)	12.87	+ 0.08	1.16
„ Total	(647)	12.78	+ 0.05	1.27
Bagdis of Moydah, 24 Parganas				
West Bengal	(60)	13.25	+ 0.15	1.19
Nayars of Travancore	(74)	14.29	+ 0.19	1.67

1. D. N. Majumdar, loc. cit. p. 80.

The average age of menarche in 647 city girls is 12.78.

Taking into consideration the heterogeneous nature of the Indian people, it is difficult to utilize these data for any comparative study. But there are indications, as pointed out by S. S. Sarkar, that in this country as well, the menarcheal age is going down ; as with the exception of the Age of Consent Committee, which assumed it to be 12 years in the case of Bengal, all previous records are in favour of putting it between 13 to 14 years. If really the Bengali girls are attaining an earlier maturity than before, we can very well assume that the other factors associated with it—the premenarcheal acceleration, the sterility interval, the first conception, etc. are also changing.¹

The variations in age of menarche in different castes and tribes in India may be attributed to the differences in climate and dietary. The Age of Consent Committee has totally denied this fact and has stated that 'it (the age of menarche) does not differ in different communities'. This is entirely baseless, because variations in age of menarche do occur from community to community and from country to country. In fact, investigations based on real scientific techniques have to be carried out in this direction to ascertain these variations. It has been found in western countries that girls in better socio-economic standard of life attained their menarche earlier.

Now speaking of menarcheal age of the Tharus of Naini Tal Tarai we have found the following age computation in our survey :—

TABLE XXII
The Age of Menarche Among Tharu Girls

Pargana	Number of women examined	Age at the menarche		
		10-12	12-14	14-16
Bilheri (Khatima Tahsil)	80	30	45	5
Nanakmata (Sitarganj Tahsil)	55	25	23	7
Kilpuri (Sitarganj Tahsil)	65	27	32	6
Total	200	82	100	18
Percentage		41	50	9

1. S. S. Sarkar, 'The Place of Human Biology in Anthropology and its Utility in the Service of the Nation,' *Man in India*, 1951, Vol. XXXI, No. I, pp. 7-8.

The early age of menarche 10 to 12 in 41%, 12 to 14 in 50% and 14 to 16 only in 9% of Tharu girls can be attributed to the reasons given by Majumdar who has found that girls of Mongoloid tribes menstruate earlier than those of Australoid and pre-Dravidian tribes. Moreover, our results correspond with the data¹ collected by him on the Tharus in this connection.

TABLE XXII (a)

Name of the tribes and No. of women examined in brackets	Locality.	Below 10	Age at the Menarche			
			10 to 12	12 to 14	14 to 16	16 & above
Hos (110)	Kolhan (Singbhum)	...	20	61	25	4
Mundas (62)	Ranchi	1	10	38	9	4
Saoras (37)	Ganjam Agency tracts	...	...	28	13	1
Kukis (24)	Hill Tipperah	3	16	4	1	...
Garos (11)	Susong Mymensingh, Bengal	2	8	1	...	...
Tharus (81)	Lakhimpur-Kheri, Pilibhit	6	38	36	5	1
Cheros (44)	Mirzapur	...	10	28	5	1

Tharu girls are not embarrassed by menstruation but only when the regularity of the flow is disturbed they may feel worried, for they think that there is something wrong with the physiological system. In case of irregularity they may tell their mother or any female relative of their own family. If it is serious, they may confide in a reputed midwife of the village. The usual description of menstruation is *kaparon se hona* (she has put on her dirty clothes).

There are a few social and domestic taboos or restrictions imposed on a woman during her period. Some kind of pollution is attached to a woman in her periods and it lasts for three to four days. But like Gonds and other tribes of Madhya Pradesh and South India, the Tharus do not

1. Loc. cit., p. 79

build a separate house for woman at this time nor do they have a special door in the house which is meant exclusively for her use. However, a woman in her periods is not allowed to enter temples or places of worship, *deolhan*, nor can she take part in any kind of religious ceremony or worship of gods and goddesses. She is also not allowed to share the bed with her husband. In spite of all these restrictions, a Tharu woman has been enjoying more latitude than the women of other tribes and castes of India. Unlike the Baiga and Gond women of Madhya Pradesh she is allowed to clean the cowshed, husk the rice, grind the wheat, fetch water, enter the kitchen and cook the meals as well. But for a few decades some of the educated Tharus have been trying to bring about certain reforms. One of the reforms, as we have already seen in the chapter on Social Organisation, aims at tabooing Tharu women to enter the kitchen or cook meals during the period—a practice which they have not been following so far. But such social reforms have been laughed at scornfully and dismissed by the majority of Tharu community. One reason why these new fangled reforms have not been taken seriously by them is that the Tharus, being an agricultural tribe, do not have much respect for nor recognition of the superiority of the educated among them. Being educated is even a disqualification, because education makes them the worse labourers on the farm. Only a few educated families as such are observing these taboos. This has been the outcome of growing Hindu contacts and spread of literacy among the Tharus in recent years rather than it is the result of social reform campaign. In this connection a few statements of some educated and progressive Tharus will, perhaps, show what they feel about the taboos which have been imposed upon a woman when she is having her periods.

Pitam Singh of Audali village, who is one of the few matriculates in Tharu community and has been in Government service for more than 19 years, says, "I will prefer to cook myself to having meals cooked by my wife when she is in her period."

Chaman Singh of Sunkheri village, another matriculate and a Government servant, says, "My wife observes certain

restrictions during her period and does not cook meals at this time but when she is alone, she is not very particular about these taboos".

Karan Singh of Kuakhara, who has received his education up to VIIth class in the Vernacular Final School, is an Arya Samajist. He also strongly condemns his own community for not observing many taboos when women menstruate and for not keeping them clean at this period.

"I never allow my wife", says Karan Singh, "to enter the kitchen or cook meals during her period."

Therefore, we find that only some of the educated Tharus really prohibit the women of their family to enter the kitchen or cook meals at this time.

After the menstruation period is over women take a dip in a river, pond or a small canal. They always take their own pocket mirrors and behold their face in them just after their bath. The belief is that they must not see any other's face except theirs or their husbands' after this ceremonial bath so that if they conceive, children will bear their features; it would be a disgrace for them, if the children should bear resemblance to any other person.

Barrenness

Children are greatly sought after and much desired by the Tharus. A barren woman does not command any respect either from her husband or from other members of the family. Sometimes, a husband resorts to a second marriage, even in the lifetime of the first wife, simply because she is barren. Badri Singh of Sunkheri village married twice during the lifetime of his first wife, Mantora, who was barren. The desire for more children may also give rise to polygynous marriages in some cases.

Causes of Barrenness

Various causes may lead to barrenness. The physiological knowledge of the Tharus is not very adequate to detect any physical defect leading to barrenness. No case has been

pointed out to me to show that the Tharus attribute sterility to physical causes. In some of the tribes venereal diseases are believed to cause barrenness. In Jaunsar Bawar, among the polyandrous Khasas the extent of venereal diseases may have something to do with childlessness or high incidence of infant mortality as pointed out by Majumdar.¹ So also among the tribes of the Maikal Hills referred to by Varrier Elwin.² But in case of the Tharus it is doubtful, if this is a cause for barrenness, as the incidence of venereal diseases is very low indeed.

Ill-luck and influence of evil stars are believed to cause barrenness in a woman. It is no wonder, if the Tharus attribute it to their bad luck, because it is very natural for simple folks, as they are, to explain things in terms of their own ill-luck. Some of the reputed *Bhararas*, like Bhaggamal *Bharara* of Naugamanath Bisaunta, believe that *Kharga*, *Pachhauwan* and other evil spirits cause sterility in some women. The Tharus, in general, believe that the expert *Bhararas* can definitely cure such causes of barrenness.

Remedies for Barrenness

When a Tharu woman does not give birth to a child after several years of her marriage, her husband becomes worried and approaches the *Bharara* who prescribes ways and means to cure her sterility. First of all, the *Bharara* tries to find out whether the barrenness is due to the mischief of evil spirits. Then he sets out to propitiate them. If he succeeds, he promises a sacrifice of a goat or a fowl.

In addition to this, many other remedies and prescriptions are also resorted to by the *Bharara* for curing sterility in a woman.

The following prescription was recorded from Bhaggamal *Bharara*'s verbal account at Naugamanath Bisaunta:—

1. D. N. Majumdar, 'The Fortunes of Primitive Tribes', p. 152.
2. Verrier Elwin, 'Conception, Pregnancy and Birth among the Tribesmen of the Maikal Hills, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 1943, Vol. IX, No. I. p. 101.

"The *Bharara* goes to the forest on Saturday or Sunday to search white flowers of *bela* tree, which blossom throughout the year. He ties a piece of cloth with two cloves and a piece of thread to one of the roots of the tree, saying, 'I invite you. If you are successful in giving a child, I will offer a sacrifice of a goat to you.' After that he plucks some flowers and ties them in a white piece of cloth. The barren woman ties it round her neck after taking her bath."

Bhaggamal has tried this prescription on Indrasan, the wife of Jot Singh, the *Padhan* of Alabirdi village. Her sterility has since been cured and now she has a daughter, Birmawati, who is four months old.

Lalmani *Bharara* of Alabirdi gave the following prescription :—

"The *Bharara* finds a *Jamun*¹ tree in some orchard outside the village and places a white piece of cloth, some cloves and thread at its root. Saturday is believed to be the most auspicious day for this purpose, Then he prays the tree saying, 'I beg of you and invite you to give your blessings to a barren woman. If she conceives and gives birth to a child, I will sacrifice a goat in your honour.' Then he climbs up the tree, makes pieces out of a small tender twig cut by him and ties them in a white piece of cloth. He hands over the pieces tied in the cloth to the barren woman who is instructed to put it round her neck after her bath."

This charm has been successfully tried on Siv Lal's wife of Alabirdi village. The charm was prepared by the informant.

Pregnancy

The Tharus believe that the cessation of a woman's menses for a period of two months or more is symptomatic of conception. But this alone is not enough. The expert old women of the family or of the village must diagnose a woman's

1. *Eugenia jambos*.

pregnancy through some signs. Budhiya, an old widow of Khetasanda Kham, who is a reputed midwife has given the following account of different signs which indicate the onset of pregnancy in a woman :—

“If a woman conceives, she will feel slothfulness in her body, and heaviness in her thighs with the result that she becomes lethargic and inactive. She also feels like vomiting. A great desire to taste sour things also develops in a pregnant woman. The nipples of her breasts develop and protrusion of navel or its dissension increases with advancing pregnancy. Then we say, now your navel resembles a leaf of a plum tree.”

In addition to this, Budhiya, said, “If a woman is already a mother, has a second pregnancy and is also nursing the child at her breasts, the milk in her breasts begins to dry as the pregnancy advances. Then we call, it has dried the milk of her breasts.”

General Precautions During Pregnancy

A Tharu woman in her pregnancy is required to observe certain taboos but she does not observe many precautions as found in other tribes in India. Other ethnographers, Nesfield¹ and Majumdar², have also stated that the Tharus do not observe many pregnancy and birth taboos. These precautions are generally intended to protect the pregnant woman and her child in the womb from the dangers of the evil spirits and also to avert the dangers due to the physical phenomena and ‘evil eyes’ of certain persons.

I was informed by a renowned midwife that a pregnant woman should never expose her body during an eclipse for fear that it may affect the pregnancy and ultimately may destroy it. So a pregnant woman is kept in doors at this time, but if she has to go out she must take a little ash and rub it on her belly. It will protect her and the child in her womb from any harm.

1. Loc. cit., P. 16

2. Loc. cit., P. 94.

Another old woman told me that a pregnant woman must not go near haunted places such as burning ghats, and holy places. Some women also take special care not to go from one house to another at dark nights just to avoid fear which, sometimes, may prove very dangerous to them. For instance, Rukmani of Barkidandi village never steps out in the dark nights during her pregnancy. Not only that, she is also not allowed to go for fishing or marketing when the pregnancy is well advanced. Generally, she is also tabooed to touch or see a dead body so that the horror of death may not affect her pregnancy but this taboo may be relaxed when her own husband or any close relative in the family may die. Mathura of Audali was not allowed to see the corpse of her *sawat* (a co-wife) but on another occasion when the father of her previous husband Munna Lal of Sariasara died, she had not only seen his corpse, but also touched it, and on both these occasions she had been pregnant.

Every pregnant woman puts on an amulet made by a *Bharara*, who by his magical powers can protect the child in the mother's womb both from the evil spirits and also from the 'evil eyes' (*najar*). The husband of the pregnant woman, however, is not required to observe any precaution during this period.

There are almost no restrictions for the diet of a woman during her pregnancy, except that she must not eat stale food. Moreover, her husband and other members of her family take special care of her and her diet. Sometimes she demands special kinds of ordinary food, but she, it is said, prefers sour things and pickles. If she expresses her wish to eat a particular thing, it is always supplied to her. Ram Charan of Barkidandi provided the head of a deer to his pregnant wife who asked for it. In other matters also the Tharus are very considerate towards a pregnant woman and treat her very tenderly at this time. "I was given whatever I liked to eat", said a Tharu woman, "when became pregnant, was not asked to do much hard labour in my household duties,"

Although the sexual intercourse between the husband and his pregnant wife continues for a considerably long period, sometimes upto sixth or seventh month, yet they believe that the intercourse with a woman in advanced pregnancy may injure the child or even cause its death in the womb.

Although all comforts are provided to the pregnant woman, yet she is not allowed to remain slothful and inactive. She does her normal household work, because they believe that if she does not work and sits idle a weak child will be born to her. A Tharu woman said, "I used to fetch water from the well, reap the harvest, cook the meals, plaster the courtyard with cowdung and perform other miscellaneous duties, but I was not allowed to lift a heavy weight after six or seven months of my pregnancy. I always received an affectionate consideration from my mother-in-law. The result was that I gave birth to a very healthy and beautiful child."

A Tharu woman is seldom allowed to live with her own parents during her pregnancy. Even if she stays with them in her early months of pregnancy, she must return to her husband's place when she has passed five or six months. The women say that it is not in good taste to let the parents see her in an advanced stage, and the same feeling is shared by the parents as well. Seldom can a delivery take place at her parent's house. When Sahadew deserted his wife, Badaliya, while she was pregnant and was in the last month of her pregnancy, she came to stay with her brother, Munshi Singh of Lauki. He was so worried that he had to find another suitor for his sister within a fortnight and asked his brother-in-law to take his sister to his own village, Naugamanath Bisaunta. Badaliya was taken to her husband, Baljit, and the very day of her arrival she gave birth to a baby. Fortunately, it did not take place at her brother's place and made both the brother and his sister very happy about it.

The Sex of The Unborn Babies.

Although the Tharus are not competent in their diagnosis of pregnancy and the sex of the unborn child, yet the parents are always very anxious to know whether they are going to

have a girl or a boy. Moreover, other women of the family and the village are also anxious about it. Some of them even forecast the sex of the unborn babies on the basis of certain symptoms or indications in the expectant mother, since they have acquired some knowledge from their own experience.

If a woman feels more heaviness on her right leg than on her left one, it is said that she will bear a male child, if otherwise, a female. Again, if there is some heaviness on the right portion of her belly, a boy is expected and if on the left, a girl.

"If a pregnant woman", said an expert midwife of Nautamanath Bisaunta, "drags her left leg first while walking, she will give birth to a boy ; if, she drags the right one, a girl would be expected. She feels extraordinarily bright and cheerful in case of a boy and contrary in case of a girl."

In many cases the indications are correctly forecasted. Sometimes engagements for future marriages are also decided upon such forecasts.

Birth Ceremonies.

At the close of ninth month when the woman reaches an advanced stage of pregnancy, she feels all the more inactive and abstains herself from her normal household duties. In some cases she may feel the labour pains before two or three days while some women may have them on the day of delivery.

A Tharu woman told me "I did not have any labour pains until the actual day of delivery. I felt the pain in the morning and the delivery took place in the afternoon."

"These labour pains", an old woman said, "are sometimes false and are distinguished from the real ones. A pregnant woman sometimes experiences false pains during advance period of pregnancy. The real pains come once, while false ones are due to the movement of the child in the womb of her mother."

The Tharus are not very particular about the lying-in-room. No separate or special house is made for it. No special doors for her exclusive entrance and exit are provided.

The delivery of the child generally takes place in one of the sleeping rooms, and the kitchen and *deothan* rooms are avoided for this purpose to avoid pollution associated with child birth.

As the real labour pains start, the expectant mother enters the room meant for her delivery. The midwife belonging to the village or to the family itself is immediately called in to attend her. The Tharus do not employ professional midwife who does not belong to their own community, but they do not mind calling a *dai* who comes from Gosain or Rawat Tharus belonging to lower social status. Budhiya, a widow of Khetansanda Kham, is a reputed *dai* of Gosain Tharu, who is called by other Tharus as well when her assistance at the time of delivery is needed. Every *dai* whether a member of the family or a resident of the same village is given one and a half maund of rice on the occasion of birth of a boy and only one maund in the case of a girl.

The women of the family or of the village assist the lying-in of the expectant mother. In no case the unmarried girls are allowed to watch the child birth lest it may create horror in them. Men wait outside the house.

It is very difficult, rather impossible, for any outsider, howsoever familiar he may be with the Tharus, to make a direct observation as to how the actual delivery takes place. Thus we can only rely upon the information supplied by women, who are either midwives or experienced old women, who have witnessed a number of child births, both in their own families and in the village. Three old and experienced Tharu women including an expert midwife gave a full description which has been recorded in their own words and reproduced below.

“As the real labour pains start the woman is taken into a room, generally a sleeping apartment where her delivery is to take place. She is seated on the ground and two or three women support her. The *dai* massages her stomach and waist. She cries and cries and tries to throw her legs on either side but the women assistants hold her in the right position and do not allow her to move. The *dai* may also apply some mustard oil on her stomach to speed up the

delivery. Sickle and *gadehala* (a kind of spade) are also kept and later on used by the *dai*. As soon as the child is born, the *dai* immediately presses the stomach of the mother to allow the placenta and impure blood pass out. Then the *dai* cuts the umbilical cord with the sickle and gives the child a hot water bath after cleaning its eyes, mouth, ears, nose and practically every part of its limbs and applies warm mustard oil over its body. After a couple of minutes or so she digs a pit with the *gadehala* in the ground of the same room, buries carefully the cord and the placenta along with *satnaja*¹ (consisting of seven varieties of grain) in the pit and levels it with mud over which the fire² is kept burning continuously for six days till the *Chhatthi* (sixth day after birth) when the purification ceremony is performed. The reason why the placenta and cord are not buried outside the room of the house is that we fear that some one may harm it or utilise it for some magical rites and do harm to the mother or the child or both."

Although the delivery is easy in majority of the cases, yet sometimes it is obstructed. The obstructions in the delivery are attributed to the evil influence of some malignant spirits. The Tharus are very vague about the causes of the obstructed or delayed delivery, but they do not take time to wait. They always depend upon their best guide, the *Bharara*, on such occasions.

Remedies in Obstructed Delivery

As soon as the *Bharara* is approached, he comes to the actual spot, takes a mug of clean water brought separately from a well and enchants it with the recitation of a particular *mantra*³ the words of which are given here :—

From Chandan *Bharara* of Jamaur Patiya (Khatima Tahsil)

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1. The grain placed in the pit along with placenta represents a invitation to give the woman more fertility to have pregnancy.
 2. The fire and iron tools, sickle and *gadehala*, are all meant to afford protection to the mother and the new born child from the 'evil-eye' and malevolent spirits.
 3. A *mantra* is recited to enchant the water to dispel the evil influence of witches to facilitate the delivery.

Mantra

Madak Bir is the bravest of the brave.

The son of *Sundari* is also brave.

Hiramma Bir is going ahead.

Pawir lags behind.

Rahaya Bir has jumped into the well of the Hell.

Oh *Rahaya*, do this much for me.

If you cannot do so much for me.

You will have to swear by the milk of mother *Anjani*.¹

Mahadevi of Jamaur Patiya village drank this enchanted water with the result that she had an easy delivery without any further obstruction or delay.

The *dai* also worships her goddess and promises her a sacrifice of goat, if she helps the woman in her delivery and does not obstruct it instead. In case all these remedies fail to bring about an easy delivery of the child, the *Bharara* immediatly offers prayers, to the goddess, *Bemaiya*² and promises to give her an offering consisting of a yard of new cloth, a hen and sweets. The Tharus have an unshakable faith in this performance and consider it the last treatment. Only the help of a good and expert *Bharara* is sought on such occasions. Bhaggamal, a reputed *Bharara* of Naugamnath Bisaunta, has successfully tried a few cases of this type.

After the delivery the *dai* performs her duties already described. She helps the mother to put on her clothes and places the child with its mother on a cot. For two days the mother is not given any food except a sweet decoction *harira*, containing dried ginger and jaggery etc., which is not only a food for the mother but also restores her lost vigour. This is continued even after the third day when she is served with some rice and pulse. It is on this day that she begins to nurse the child at her breasts. In the meantime the child is kept on a goat's milk. The *dai* visits the mother and the child till the *chhatthi* day and applies mustard oil on the body of the child and especially on the umbilical cord until it withers away.

1. The mother of mythological monkey-god, Hanuman.

2. The goddess of procreation.

Taboos at Birth

Generally for five days after the child birth the mother and the child are considered unclean, because the delivery is always associated with impurity. They remain in a taboo condition till the final purification ceremony is performed. The mother is always confined to the room of her house. The mother or any woman, for that matter, is strictly prohibited to take out the child from her room till the purification ceremony is performed on the *chhatthi* day. The whole house is regarded as polluted and the contacts with the family are avoided by the villagers. No *puja* or feast of any kind can be performed during this period. No guest or any outsider is entertained. "I did not stay at my parents' house at Naugamanath Bisaunta", said Mathura of Audali village, "as my brother Umedi Singh's wife gave birth to a child, I had to stay at my sister's house in the same village till *chhatthi* was over."

The husband is not allowed to see his child before the *chhatthi* ceremony. The Tharus always take precautions against evil spirits and 'evil eyes'. They place an iron instrument or sickle under the cloth which they may use as mother's pillow. But on the occasion of *chhatthi* day this is removed by the *dai* who replaces a new knife or a sickle which must be held by every one whoever takes the child in his or her lap.

Abnormal Births

The Raksa

Abnormal births among the Tharus are of rare occurrence but whenever they occur they create consternation not only in the family but in the neighbourhood. A Tharu woman told me, "a child born with teeth is known as *Raksa*, who just after his birth begins to crawl. Sometimes its face may resemble that of a monkey or a leopard. In case no physical abnormality is detected on its body, the child will kill the mother by sucking her blood instead of milk at

her breasts". As soon as such a child is born the *dai* and other assistants bandage the mother's eyes lest she may see the *Raksa* child and feel horrified. If she is allowed to see such an abnormal progeny of hers, her future pregnancy would be affected and she may herself die of the shock. The death of such a child is hastened by showing to it every possible neglect. The mother does not give her milk and does not keep the child with her. Sometimes the child is even buried alive in an earthen pot. They believe that if it is allowed to live, some disaster is bound to follow. I did not come across any such freaks of nature because of rare occurrence and because such events are guarded with utmost secrecy. The common belief is that the evil spirits affect the child in the womb, deform it and fill it with their own demoniac qualities and so the child comes to have the name of *Raksa* (*Raksa* means a demon).

Multiple Births

Twin births are very rare among the Tharus. In the villages of Khatima and Sitarganj Tahsils only four cases of twin births could be recorded. Out of these four cases in Pehaniya (Khatima Tahsil), and Sunkheri, Nakulia and Dhanpur villages (Sitarganj Tahsil), only Jagannath's twins, Muli and Sadhu, have survived and both have attained the age of seven but the rest are dead. The birth of such children is considered very auspicious but they rarely survive. The twins of very lucky parents only survive. No specific reason is assigned for multiple pregnancy. It may be attributed, as one Tharu said, only to the superfecundity of a woman. Otherwise they believe that God has been very merciful upon the parents to give them two children instead of one.

Infantile Mortality and its Cure

Infantile mortality is very high among the Tharus. These deaths are attributed to evil spirits, while majority of deaths actually occur because of early marriage of Tharu girls at

the age of twelve or so. They perform certain rites to propitiate the spirits in order to save their children from death. These rites are performed from the moment the baby comes into the world. As soon as the child is born, the maternal aunt pierces its ears and then weighs it with an equal quantity of rice as if she has purchased it. The sale proceeds of this rice are utilised in purchasing clothes for the child. Then the *dai* performs her duties of cutting umbilical cord. The belief is that the child may survive as it has been purchased by another woman whose lucky hand may save it.

The assistance of the *Bharara* is also sought to protect the child from the evil spirits who may cause its death, but only experienced *Bharara* can perform this task with success. First of all those prescriptions which have been employed to cure sterility may also be tried in this case. Bhaggamal *Bharara* of Naugamanath Bisaunta, has tried them successfully in many cases. More effective prescriptions based on some magical *mantras* and religious rites are also suggested by some of the *Bhararas* to eliminate the influence of evil spirits which are responsible for infant mortality. Chandan *Bharara* of Jamaur Patiya (Khatima Tahsil) recited these *mantras* with two cloves and used them as a charm.

Mantra (i)

Kalaiya, the God of Death, has started from *Dhur* Mountain.

What kind of bangles is he putting on?

His turban consists of 80 yards of cloth, his dress is red.

Twelve drunkards are drinking wine and are eating fifty four goats.

Kalaiya is running about intoxicated and all the world is awake.

All the evil spirits should be spell bound.

Control the *Masan*, control, control.

Do this work for me, otherwise the milk of the mother *Anjani* will be a curse on thee.

Mantra (ii)

There is an iron house with a door made of copper.
 Who is the guard? It must be *Atit Kaluwa*
Bhairaw is the guard. Control all the directions.
 Control 900 bighas of land, control, control,
 Control soon. Do this work for me.
 Otherwise the milk of the mother *Anjani* will be a
 curse on thee

After that, two charmed cloves with *mantras* are handed over to the woman who has given birth to a child for protection against evil spirits. In case the child really survives, a cup of wine, a hen's egg are offered to the diety.

Chandan *Bharara* added that he tried these *mantras* in the case of *Chhota's* wife of *Bharai* village, who used to lose children just after birth. Now she is perfectly happy with a son and a daughter. He was given a cow as a reward for his services.

The Chhatthi or Purification Ceremony

The *Chhatthi* ceremony is held on the sixth day of child's birth. It is the final purification ceremony of the new born baby and its mother and other members of the family in which the child has been born. Until this day the whole family remains in a state of taboo. No *puja* or any ceremony can take place till this day. On the *chhatthi* day the women of the family throw away all the dirty clothes and earthen pots used in the lying-in room. They plaster the room with cowdung. The bed and other belongings of this room are washed by the women. The *dai* gives a hot water bath to the child and its mother who are given new clothes to put on. The fire of the room is taken out but the women take special care to keep it burning. 'If the fire is extinguished', an old *dai* told me, 'the span of life of the child is reduced'. Now all the members of the family take a ceremonial bath to wash off the impurities brought at child birth. Thereafter the *dai* lights an earthen lamp near the gods in the court yard and puts the sickle and *gadehala* near them. The mother

brings out the child near the gods followed by the *dai*. On this occasion men, women and children of the village assemble on an invitation to celebrate the *chhatthi* ceremony. The women sing auspicious songs specially suited for this occasion.

(i)

The pregnant woman (mother) is feeling real labour pains and her eyes are drowsy.

Call my mother-in-law and hand over to her the box brought from my parent's house.

Call my *jethani*¹ and hand over to her my *bindiya*.

Call my *dewrani*² and hand over the charge of my kitchen.

(ii)

Lightly play on your drums and sing slowly.

If my *nanandi*³ hears, she will bring the ceremonial presents.

The son of the tailor lives adjacent to my village.

He will bring *jhagiya* and *kaliya* for my child.

The son of *Patawa* lives adjacent to my village.

He will bring *gajkar*, *pahunchi* and will bring ceremonial present.

The son of the carpenter lives adjacent to my village.

He will bring a cot made of sandal wood with his ceremonial present.

Now the *dai* and the mother keep some rice in the corners of their garment but the former also holds a jug of water in her hand. Both of them scatter rice on the ground beside the gods and the *dai* sprinkles water. After that she sees the mother off to her new bed still scattering rice and sprinkling water on the ground in the same manner without looking back towards the gods. Whatever rice is left in the end is utilised in the preparation of rice pudding (*Khir*) for the mother.

1. Husband's elder brother's wife.
2. Husband's younger brother's wife.
3. Husband's sister.

One day before the *chhatthi* day the men and boys go out fishing and bring large quantity of fish from some river or lake nearby. On the day of purification ceremony, many varieties of meals are prepared, but fish generally forms an important item of the menu. All the inhabitants of the village and other relatives are invited to partake of meal but if the family is too poor to feed many people they call only one person from each house of the village. When Master Chamaru Ram of Baghaura village celebrated his grandson's *chhatthi* ceremony, he invited the whole village including men, women and children. Before the meal is served, the mother and the *dai* take out some food for the goddess of procreation, *Bemaiya*. Then they eat their meal and others after them. All the relatives and other villagers give money, at least four annas to the new born babe. The money thus collected is spent only on the child's clothes and ornaments. On this occasion the women sing songs of congratulations.

Congratulatory Song

My husband is calling for help; I am dying of my throes.
My mother-in-law is calling her daughter-in-law; *nanad*
calls *bhauji*.

My husband calls me again and again, I am dying of
labour pains.

Behind my village the son of the carpenter, he should be
asked to make the wooden dolls.

Behind my village the son of the tailor, he should be asked
to stitch new clothes.

My mother-in-law calls her daughter-in-law, my *nanad* calls
for *bhauji*.

My husband calls out to me to have patience.

Behind my village the son of *Patawa*, he should be asked to
make *pahunchi*¹ etc.

Behind my village the son of the goldsmith, he should be
asked to make some ornaments.

Five women have been called to sing auspicious songs and
are having my child in their lap.

1. A bracelet of beads.



Plate No. 23. A well-dressed Tharu child.

The old women of the family present to the gods the clothes specially made for the child to invoke their good wishes and blessings. The *dai* dresses the child with these clothes and puts round its neck some strings or garlands of red beads, small silver bracelets on both of its wrists. Black thread is also tied around its feet and hands. The black colour, it is said, protects the child from the 'evil eye' which some persons are believed to possess.

After that the aunt (child's father's sister) prepares *kajal* (the black soot) and the *dai* applies it to the eyes of the child. She also draws a figure of the goddess, *Bemaiya*, on the wall of the mother's room. The goddess, it is said, will protect the child from the influence of the evil spirits when the mother leaves it alone and goes to perform her household work. The *dai* and the aunt of the child ask for their reward for their respective services they have performed. The aunt is given a rupee and four annas at least, a customary gift, but if it is the first child and the family is not poor, she may even get a calf, a cow or a goat. When Juganiya, daughter-in-law of Chamaru Ram of Baghaura, gave birth to the first child, he gave a cow to the child's aunt. The *dai* generally receives her usual share. Moreover, if the family, in which the *chhatthi* ceremony is taking place, has got a better economic status, it may celebrate this occasion with a big feast and dance parties. In Juganiya's case two Tharu dance parties were invited to entertain the guests and relatives.

After the *chhatthi* ceremony is over, the mother and her family are freed from all sorts of taboos imposed on them during the six days from the birth of the child. Now the mother resumes her household duties. In case the family consists of many members, she may be allowed some consideration and may be assisted in her work. For a month or so, she takes special care of the child and rubs it with mustard oil to keep it warm and to protect it from cold and cough.

The Tharus do not attach great importance to the naming of the child and it need not be done by a Brahmin. In Bawanpuri village, villagers invite the Brahmins either from the hills or from the plains to perform the name-

giving ceremony. These Brahmins give names to the children according to the particular star under the influence of which the child is born. But the majority of the Tharus are not very serious about it, and name their children at the age of two or three. Before their contact with the Hindus, they used to give meaningless names like Alli, and Thagu to their children, but now majority of their children are named after Hindu gods and goddesses like Mahadew, Durga Prasad etc. Two interesting points are noteworthy in the naming of children.

(i) If parents have lost a number of children in succession, they give some ugly names to them to protect their lives from evil spirits. The most common among these include the names of scheduled castes, namely, Chamaru or Chamariya, Bhangi or Bhangan for boys and girls respectively to make them unattractive to the evil spirits.

(ii) Posthumous children are frequently given the names of Garbu or Garabiya, as the case may be.

Many a time their belief comes true in the first case and the children named after the scheduled castes do survive and live a good span of life. Chamaru Singh, a teacher and resident of Bhitaura, told me that he was the fifth child of his parents, who could survive only after that name Chamaru was given to him. Such instances are common in the Tharu community.

After a month or so of the *chhatthi* ceremony the mother puts ornaments on her child, such as, a garland of *painta*, *kauri*, *thumara*, a small *saukhi* and *sippi* (shells, cowries etc.) around the neck of the child, a garland of white *guriya* round the feet and the hand; a seven coloured thread *kardhani* is tied round his waist. The additional changes in the ornamentation are made as the child advances in age. When the children attain the age of one year or so *harawa* and *hansuli* are put round the necks of boys and girls respectively.

The mother is always delighted in feeding the child at her breasts. The sucking period, the Tharu women say, is quite long and ranges from two to three years till the next child is born to a woman. After two years or so the child is trained to eat pulses and rice, but the breast-feeding continues

till the breasts are dried up in the second pregnancy. Sometimes the mother may allow it even after the birth of another baby. In Barkidandi village Ram Charan's son, Gurdayal, was fed on his mother's breasts even when she had a younger baby to nurse. The attitude of the Tharus towards their children is very mild. A Tharu mother told me, 'we cannot see our children weeping and crying nor do we beat our children on petty offences. If we do this their natural growth will be restricted'.

No special ceremonies are observed when the ears of children are pierced. After three or four years and in some cases after five or six years the girl's ears are pierced in three places, while boys have it at only one place.

Mundan or Hair-cutting Ceremony

Few decades ago the Tharus never observed *Mundan* ceremony but as their contacts with the Hindus have been more developed, they have borrowed this custom from them. But only a few Tharus have adopted this ceremony. It seems to be of little significance among the majority of their community. The original belief associated with the *Mundan* ceremony is that the hair which a child has from its birth are polluted. They must be cut to bring about purification. The child's age at which this ceremony is to be performed varies from caste to caste and even family to family, but it seldom exceeds five or six years of age among the Tharus. A special sanctity is attached to the ceremony. For instance, it is to be performed on an auspicious day, usually Sunday. The hair so cut must be offered to some holy shrine of their gods or the holy waters of the Sarda river.

The Tharu children have no world of their own like the children of more civilised people, nor do they lead a community life in the dormitories like the Gond and Maria children of Madhya Pradesh. From the moment they gain enough physical strength they follow a routine closely resembling that of their parents. In this way they assimilate the pattern of adult life by the conscious process of imitation. They do not form a separate body excluded from the

occupations of their parents but from an early age they form a part of the general socio-economic structure. Thus girls are trained to assist their mother in almost all household duties. Sumitra, a nine year old daughter of Prag Singh, the *Padhan* of Khetasanda Kham, is quite able to look after her three year old brother, to sweep the house, keep it in order, to fetch water and to cook meals, while her mother is away for some work. Similarly, the boys are also given training in manufacturing the fishing-nets and traps, spading, ploughing and levelling the fields. When the parents go out for fishing, children and adolescents also accompany them. On a close observation one finds how particular attention is paid to children by their parents who frequently demonstrate to them the art of fishing and hunting. They are always on the guard that the children should not go far in the deep water for catching fish, because there is every likelihood of drowning.

Thus the Tharu children are not a burden upon their parents who train them in all the economic activities of their life. Again, even after the father's death, a son of ten or twelve years of age can look after his widow mother and younger brothers and can perform, if not as efficiently as his father used to do, many tasks relating to farming. In Kotra village, Paras Ram, aged 11 years only is supporting his widow mother as he lost his father last year.

Such are the rites, ceremonies, taboos and precautions which are observed during pregnancy, birth and childhood by the Tharus. We have seen how many of their old rites and customs relating to pregnancy and birth have lost much of their meaning but still the majority of the Tharus believe in the efficacy of the *Bharara's* charms and prescriptions which are said to have cured the barrenness of women and have facilitated the obstructed delivery of children. Even today they take a number of precautions to protect the child and its mother against evil spirits and supernatural dangers. In spite of all this, a change is found in the rites, rituals and ceremonies relating to pregnancy and childbirth and the tendency is fast growing to copy Hindu customs as far as possible.

VII

MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

The Tharus were practising various forms of marriage, such as, marriage by capture and by purchase, *kaj* and *dola*, mention of which has been made by Nesfield, Risley and others. But now with the integration of the Tharu society and with growing contact with the Hindus, the Tharus have given up some of these forms like marriage by capture and introduced into their regular form of marriage new rites and ceremonies which they have borrowed from the Hindus, though they have still retained some of the older practices. Marriage by capture which was a few decades ago very common with the sanction of the society has now been discontinued, though its vestiges are still traceable in some of the marriage rites. Marriage by purchase is rarely done as it is looked down upon by the community. Besides regular form of marriage, widow re-marriage, *gharbaitha*, levirate, *ureri* and *dola* are practised by the Tharus. Polygyny is socially recognised and respected. There is freedom of divorce which is not so frequently allowed in Hindu society. Marriage is obligatory for every Tharu and an unmarried person is looked down upon by the members of his own community. An unmarried woman has no social status. Even a bachelor finds his life very difficult when he himself has to manage his domestic duties, such as, cooking meals, fetching water, grinding wheat and husking rice etc. in addition to his own field labour.

The rules of endogamy and exogamy play their own significant part in forming matrimonial alliances and in limiting the choice of the bride. As described in the last

chapter, the higher and lower moieties are endogamous, while to each other they serve as exogamous groups. Further the Tharus do not allow cross-cousin and parallel-cousin marriages. There is no territorial exogamy. There is no rule that the bride may be sought only from another village.

Though the different forms of marriage mentioned above are recognised, regular form of marriage is becoming more common. In the house census of thirty-three villages it was found that out of 1,775 total number of marriages, the regular form of marriage has taken place in no less than 1,525 cases, that is, in 85.92% as given in Table XXIII

TABLE XXIII

Table showing different forms of marriages

Forms of marriage	Tahsil Khatima (16 villages)	Tahsil Sitar- ganj (17 villages)	Total	Per- centage
1. Regular marriage	902	623	1,525	85.92
2. Widow-Remarriage	42	44	86	4.84
3. Levirate	21	11	32	1.81
4. Sororate	3	5	8	.45
5. <i>Dola</i>	7	1	8	.45
6. Polygyny	7	14	21	1.18
7. Marriage of the divorced persons	39	36	75	4.23
8. <i>Gharbaittha</i>	13	7	20	1.12
Total	1,034	741	1,775	100

Regular Marriage

Child marriage is the rule among the Tharus. For a regular marriage the betrothal ceremony takes place between one to five years of age, though the actual wedding is solemnised when boys and girls have attained the age of ten to sixteen. The table XXIV shows the age at which marriage takes place among the Tharus.

TABLE XXIV

Table Showing Age of Marriage Among the Tharus

Age at which men married.	No.	Percentage	Age at which women married	No.	Percentage
10-12	58	11.60	10-12	178	44.50
12-14	255	51.0	12-14	112	28.0
14-16	160	32.0	14-16	90	22.50
16 and above	27	5.40	16 & above	20	5.0
Total	500	100		400	100

Early marriage provides a safeguard against premarital sexual relationship among the Tharus. The negotiations of a betrothal are not usually carried on by the parents or guardians of the parties but by an intermediary known as *Manjhapatiya* who arranges the marriage. For his services, this important functionary is not remunerated except that he is entertained with liquor by the parents of both parties, though, he may secretly accept money from them. His advice is very important, rather indispensable for both the parties, but the final choice remains with the parents who further investigate such matters as these :—

- (i) that the economic position of both the families is sound;
- (ii) that the moral reputation of the families is intact and no member of either of the families has run away with a woman of a different caste and, later on, married her;
- (iii) that no member of either of the families is suffering from leprosy;
- (iv) that they are not inflicted by evil spirits;
- (v) that the girl and the boy to be engaged do not suffer from any physical disability.

After all these considerations are looked into by both the parties, an auspicious day is fixed for the betrothal (*Dikhnauri*) ceremony. On this day male representatives of the girl's

family and some of her relatives accompanied by the *Manjhapatiya* go to perform the *Tika* ceremony. At the betrothal (*Dikhnauri*) the boy's father serves the guests from the girl's village known as *Dekhnars* with liquor, goat's meat and sweets. At the end of the feast, the prospective boy is given one rupee and annas four in his right palm by the father of the girl, who also daubs his forehead with turmeric and rice as *Tika* repeating to him 'you have become my son-in-law from today' (*aj se tum hamara damāda ho gayo*). The rest of the night is passed in music and dancing which are witnessed by all the guests and other villagers. All the expenses are met by the father of the boy.

The betrothal is binding on both the parties. It is likely to be broken only if the boy or the girl dies, if the boy or the girl contracts some incurable diseases, if either of their parents die before marriage, it is considered as an evil omen, or if some calamity, such as, fire and dacoity befalls the family. On the other hand, if the parents of the girl refuse to marry her to the boy engaged to her and cannot give strong reasons for doing so, the parents of the boy are entitled to claim the compensation for the expenditure of the *Dikhnauri*. They can take their case to the *Panchayat* and even to the court, if necessary. Mahadew refused to marry his daughter to Sandhu after the *Dikhnauri* and approached the *Panchayat* which decided that Mahadew should pay rupees 200 to Jwala, Sandhu's father, to compensate his expenses in the *Dikhnauri*. Mahadew had to carry out the decision of the *Panchayat*.

From the *Dikhnauri* to the wedding ceremony both the families exchange visits and gifts on festivals and other special occasions, though it is more obligatory on the part of the boy's parents to send the presents (*dali*) to the girl's house.

Formerly, the *Dikhnauri* was followed by the *Aṇṇaparaya* (second betrothal) and *Badkahi* (declaration) ceremonies, now they are no more in vogue. The Tharus simply fix a day in the month of *Magh* when their marriages must take place by an unbreakable tradition. The actual wedding can be cele-



Plate No. 24. **Tika** ceremony of the boy by the bride's father.

brated only on a Sunday or Thursday in *Magh*. The usual practice is that the boy's parents propose to the girl's father in the month of *Pus* to marry his daughter to their son in the following month. They formally fix either Sunday or Thursday in the month of *Magh* in consultation with the *Manjhapatiya*. After fixing the day the invitations are sent through a messenger to the relatives and friends with a token of *batasas* (sweets) from the boy's family and betel nuts from the girl's. The preparations for the marriage ceremony are commenced. If the wedding is to be solemnised on Sunday, the preliminary functions begin from Friday. This day is believed to be an auspicious day when the goddess of cleanliness is supposed to visit the bridegroom's and bride's houses at night to pronounce her blessings for the happy performance of the following ceremonies. The long maze of rituals and ceremonies are simultaneously performed at the bridegroom's and bride's homes only with the difference that at the bridegroom's place, his sisters take the leading part in the ceremonies, whereas, at the bride's home, her *bhaujis* (elder brothers' wives) perform the functions.

On Friday, the women devote the whole day in cleaning their house and plastering it with cowdung or sometimes even decorating it with coloured designs. In the evening they demolish old hearths of their house and place new ones. On this occasion they sing the following *suhagi* (auspicious) song:—

Suhagi Git

Bring the smooth and tenacious clay and clean water.
Come ! Oh ! my fair daughters to place the hearths.

Thereafter seven unmarried girls in the boy's home and five in the girl's grind the *urad* (pulse) and soak it in water for the whole night for the feast on the following day.

Early in the morning on Saturday men set out for *kathasei*, that is, to fetch fuel from the jungle, which they require to cook food for the ceremonial feasts. They worship the goddess *Bhumsen* on the outskirts of their village by offering

hom to her and tie the unspun thread round a *pipal* tree. The fuel gathered and brought in the ceremonial way is considered auspicious for the following feasts. The women utilise this fuel in making *baras*, *puries* etc. for worshipping the goddess *Bhumsen* or *Bhuiya*. An invitation is sent to all the women of the village to join in the worship of *Bhumsen* through a *dhimar* or *kahar*, a person belonging to lower castes. An old woman, usually the grandmother or the mother, must be dressed in new clothes for this occasion. She must keep a fast till the worship of the goddess is over. The women of the village accompanied by a party of drummers and *dhimar* carrying thread, jaggery, *ghee* and cooked food to be offered to the goddess go to her led by a venerable woman. She offers *hom* to the goddess, while the rest of the women sing the following *mangal* song:—

Mangal Song

Come! All the women, come to worship the goddess *Bhuiya*.
Oh my pretty women ! you sprinkle flour on the ground
while going to worship the goddess.

You are going to worship the *Bhuiya*, place the *hom* on the
ground.

The women are offering *hom* to the goddess and touching
the feet of the goddess.

They are touching the feet of seven goddesses.

They request her to help them at the time of need.

After the worship is over, every one of the party is treated with the food offered to the goddess and the party returns to the village. In the evening a big feast known as *Bhuiya ki roti* is given to all the relatives and guests in the name of the goddess, *Bhumsen*, to invoke her special blessings. Four men and women are selected to take the responsibility of all the arrangements for the next day of the actual wedding and are known as *karbaries*.

On Sunday from early morning the following ceremonies are performed simultaneously in both the houses of the bridegroom and the bride till the bridegroom's party arrives at the bride's place. Some women engage themselves in cook-

ing food for the feast, while others led by the mother go to their *Padhan's* place for *sardena* with the *dhimar* who carries a handful of rice and two pice in a brass plate. The party is received by the *Padhaniya*, the wife of the *Padhan*, who adds some rice and money to the brass plate as a token of her good wishes.

After *sardena*, women drew a square of rice flour, where a small earthen pitcher of water for each corner, a lighted lamp on the scattered rice on a leaf-plate, seven knives and two or more small iron swords are placed together with a wooden plank and a brass plate containing turmeric powder, mustard oil and green grass at its centre. The bridegroom in his own home is seated on this *chauk* and is anointed with a mixture of mustard oil and turmeric powder by his sisters, with the accompaniment of the following songs :—

Mangal Song (i)

Plough the fields on the slopes of the hills, plough the turmeric fields.

At what price the turmeric is being sold and purchased by the father ?

The turmeric costs one lakh, but the father is purchasing it at two lakhs.

At what price the turmeric is being sold and purchased by the uncle ?

The turmeric costs one lakh but the uncle purchases it at two lakhs.

Mangal Song (ii)

Unveil the face of the bridegroom and apply the auspicious oil.
Open the back of the bridegroom and apply the auspicious oil.
Open the chest of the bridegroom and apply the auspicious oil.
Open the legs of the bridegroom and apply the auspicious oil.

Now the *neotariyas* (relatives and friends of the bridegroom) are called upon to offer their *neota* to him. *Neota* is a cash present made by the relatives and other villagers to meet the expenses of marriage. It is a voluntary contribution which is an obligatory custom for them on the understanding that

on similar occasions in their families they will be paid back. Accordingly the *neotariyas* come one after another, daub the forehead of the bridegroom with oil and turmeric powder from the plate placed before him and drop their cash present in another plate afterwards. The bridegroom takes it out and hands it over to his mother who sits beside him. In the end he leaves a little money in the plate to be distributed among his sisters as their reward.

After this *neota* ceremony, the bridegroom takes his bath assisted by his sisters who remove the turmeric and oil anointed over his body and break his old *kardhani*¹ and give a new one with a *langot* which had been blessed by the gods. The bride in her home is given a new *dhoti* to wear after her bath and is taken inside the house where her *bhaujis* remove the *dhoti* and cover her person with a quilt. The belief is that she must wait for the clothes which must come from the bridegroom's family, for, after this ceremonial bath she has become her husband's property. Now follows the feast *haldi ki roti*. Another feast *challi bera* is also given only at the bridegroom's place before his wedding procession starts for the bride's village.

After the feast, the brother-in-law dresses the bridegroom with a marriage attire consisting of *jhagiya*, *putaka*, *sutaniya*, *pagari*, *alaga* and *phent* brought by the tailor who receives his tip of one rupee and annas four. The mother anoints the bridegroom's eyes with *kajal* (a black soot) and gets her reward. A younger brother or a cousin of the bridegroom who is also dressed in the same kind of clothes is known as *sahbilla*, the companion of the bridegroom. The *sahbilla* sits beside him in all the ceremonies thereafter. Now two suits of clothes for the bride, consisting *lehanga*, *saluka*, *angiya*, *odhani*, *chadar*, *choti*, *doriya* are kept in a basket together with jaggery, *puries* and curd. This basket is carried along with the *barat*, the marriage party. The procession is organised in the following manner. The palanquin in which sits the bridegroom dressed in his wedding attire with a sword and a shield, leads the procession, while carts and other conveyances

1. A black thread worn round one's waist.

of the marriage party follow it. A sword taken by the bridegroom may be said to be a relic of marriage by capture but now the custom is practised only in its imitation form. The procession starts amidst much rejoicings of the party accompanied by the beatings of drums and cymbals and firings of guns. The women also follow the procession up to the outskirts of the village, throwing rice over the palanquin. On reaching the boundary, the procession stops to worship the local gods of the village for the protection against the spirits of the new village, which may do some mischief to the members of the party, particularly to the bridegroom. The *Bharara* who accompanies the party not only chants certain *mantras* to envoke the blessings of the gods and goddesses but devises means to fortify the procession from the evil influence of outside godlings and evil spirits. He pronounces certain charms over a cup of water, which is continually sprinkled on the bridegroom by his brother-in-law till the procession reaches its destination.

The party resumes its journey with guns booming. When it reaches the boundary of the bride's village, some of her representatives indulge in the customary practice of throwing brickbats on the processionists by way of mock defence, known as *dilamari*. The reception given to them by the people of the bride's village with a loud cry of 'throw stones' may be said to be a vestige of marriage by capture. They are given some jaggery to make them quiet. After that, the bride's people receive the procession which marches again to the tune of musical instruments and a few gun shots punctuated now and then with shouts into the bride's village till it reaches the door of the bride's house. Here the bride's father comes forward for the reception of the party and salutes it by saying '*Ram Ram*' a number of times and leads it to the tent or the house specially arranged for the night's stay. Every care is taken for the convenience of the guests who are now given some refreshments followed by a sumptuous dinner at night. But the bridegroom and his brother-in-law are led straight into the bride's house, where he lifts the bridegroom in his lap and presents him to the bride's mother, Two suits of clothes for the bride (one pair for

wedding ceremony and the other for *chala*), *puries* and curd are then presented by the bridegroom's brother-in-law to the bride's sisters-in-law who while accepting them, insist on their present of one rupee and annas four for unfastening the knot of the Basket. This is followed by frivolous jokes between the brother-in-law of the bridegroom and sisters-in-law of the bride. All the while, the bride is being dressed in the new clothes brought from the bridegroom's place for the performance of *Bhanwar*, the circumambulation ceremony. Formerly, the Tharus never invited the Brahmins to perform this ceremony but now occasionally they do it. Baldew Singh, the *Padhan* of Sunkheri village, invited a *Pahari* Brahmin to perform the *Bhanwar* ceremony of his grandson, Man Singh. Even if a Brahmin is engaged at their wedding, he usually performs only the *Bhanwar* ceremony according to the Hindu rites and the rest of the rituals are performed according to the tribal custom.

Now a square as we have described in the bridegroom's house, is drawn on the ground of the bride's courtyard. The bride and the bridegroom dressed in their marriage attire are led to the square, the former being supported by her sisters-in-law and the latter by his brother-in-law or in his absence, by his father's sister's husband. They circumambulate square seven times, the bridegroom leading in first six rounds and the bride in the last one. Regarding this custom the Tharus do not have any definite explanation except that it has been handed down to them, though it may be said that they may have initiated the custom of *saptapadi* prevalent among the Hindus. The bride has to veil her face during the performance—a custom never observed by her in life. This ritual makes the marriage complete and binding. The seventh and the last round made by the bride is the proof that she has bound her husband. Consequently, she is socially entitled to wear bangles and silver rings for the toes, the symbols of wifehood. Like the Hindus, a vermilion mark has recently been introduced and it is applied over the parting of the bride's hair. Another Hindu custom initiated by the Tharus following the *Bhanwar* is *kanya dan* where the elders of the bride wash her and bride-

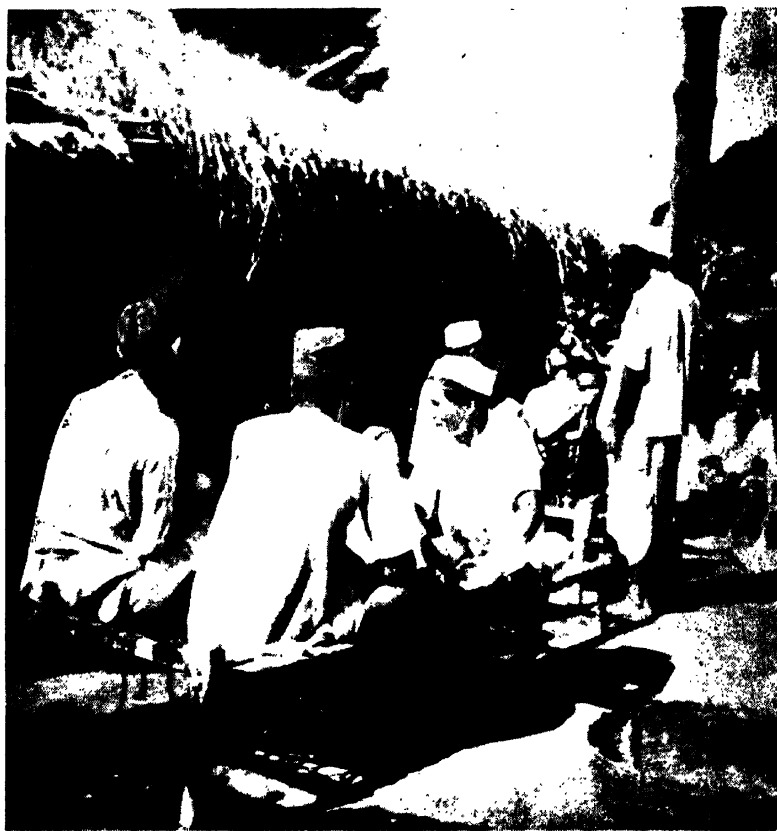


Plate No. 25. Liquor is a necessary item in every ceremony.

groom's feet and present money or silver ornaments to them after placing bride's left palm on the bridegroom's right one.

After the wedding, the bride's people treat the bridegroom and his party with a sumptuous meal consisting of rice, *bara*, *urad* and vegetables. Although the use of meat which is an essential item of food on this occasion is strictly forbidden by *Jati Sudhar Saṁha*, only a few take the prohibition seriously. The bridegroom refuses to eat his meal until his demands for a buffalo or a cow are met by his father-in-law. A poor father-in-law pays him at least one rupee and annas four. He also receives the present of a brass plate and a glass used by him during his meal. The feeding of the bridegroom in this manner corresponds to that of *kalewa* among the Hindus. The feasting is followed by a tribal dance. Sometimes prostitutes are also engaged to entertain the guests with their dance and music according to the means of the bridegroom's father.

The following morning again, a simple feast is given to the party and the bride's people present to the father or the guardian of the bridegroom five to seven brass cooking utensils and a few clothes as a dowry. The people of the village also give some presents to the couple as a matter of social obligation. Preparations are set a foot for the departure of the bride. The bride dressed in her wedding attire is conducted to the palanquin by her sisters-in-law but she is not allowed to be taken away till the reward of *chadarabadi* (holding the bride's covering) amounting to rupees five has been paid to them. After the customary dues have been paid, the procession proceeds towards the bridegroom's village. No sooner does it move than the bride begins to cry and bewail some of her relatives who had lately died. She continues to do so all the way. Some female relatives of the bride and her younger brother also follow the procession in a separate cart. If the processionists come across a river or a pond on their way, the *Bharara* takes a handful of water from the river or the pond and sprinkles it over them after enchanting it with his *mantras* so that they may reach the village safely. It is done, because they believe that rivers etc. are usually haunted by evil spirits. Again,

on reaching the boundary of the bridegroom's village, the *Bharara* stops the procession to take steps to ward off the influence of malevolent spirits of the way and of another village. He offers a sacrifice of a hen to the village goddess. He then makes seven rounds of the procession and throws balls of flour from east to west and vice versa. At the door of the bridegroom's house, the bride and the bridegroom are welcomed by the latter's mother and sisters. They tie one corner of his dress with that of the bride and lead them straight into the house but sisters-in-law of the bride do not leave her till they are amply rewarded. On this occasion, the women sing an auspicious song.

Suhagi Song

Oh Nightingale of the forest; the autumn has set in the forests
The *Sajan*¹ is gambling with *samadhi*; they are playing a
ceremonial game.

Who has defeated him? Who is the winner? And who has
won his last chance?

Sajan has defeated him, has won over *samadhi*, the bridegroom
has won the chance.

He has won outside the house, inside the house, all the
houses, etc.

He has also won a girl of twelve years, in which his heart
resides.

The mother of the bridegroom is asking him jokingly 'Tell me
about your marriage.'

The bridegroom and the bride are seated on a wooden plank. They play with green grass kept in a brass plate. This ritual is known as *chhara chhinta*. The couple is then conducted by the bridegroom's sister to another room for *sitkaura* rite. Here they are obstructed by the brother-in-law of the bridegroom who moves away after getting his reward. They call it *mot gherai*. The *sitkaura* rite is observed by tasting the mixture of rice, curd and jaggery from the hands of the bride and the bridegroom. After that, they are served with a sumptuous meal, though the bride usually fore-

1. The husband.

goes her share, for she feels sad at the separation from her parents and at the strangeness of a new house. The women sing a song full of frivolous jokes.

Song

The bridegroom may eat yam with rice.

Your maternal uncle is enjoying the company of your mother.

After the meals the sisters of the bridegroom untie the knot and receive their present again. The bride is taken away by her sisters-in-law to another room, and the bridegroom by his brother-in-law. In the evening, the feast of *Bahuju* is given to the people of the village as a reception to the bride. This feast is better known as *kachchi pakki roti*, in which rice, pulse, *puries*, meat and drink are served together. The *Padhan* of the village and his wife are the special guests as they must take first morsel of food. After the meals, the bride touches their feet and receives her cash present. This is repeated to every villager who is obliged to present the bride with whatever he can afford. All the money collected in this manner is usually spent over the ornaments of the bride. The very night, *Ninaharas* (the bride's father and other relatives) reach the bridegroom's village in order to bring the bride back the following morning, because as a rule, she cannot stay at her husband's place for more than one night on her first visit. *Ninaharas* are also given a sumptuous meal. They have to pay the bridegroom a cash present both before their meals and after, while he washes their hands.

Next morning the *Ninaharas* take away the bride who, before her departure, receives a present of some silver ornaments from her mother-in-law.

Chala

The *chala* ceremony bears similarity to the *gauna*¹ of the Hindus. It takes place two or three months after the wedding, generally, in the lighted half of *Chait* or *Baisakh*.

1. Second ceremonial visit of the bride to her husband's place.

Like the wedding, the Tharus are very particular to perform *chala* ceremony only on Sunday or Thursday. If the wedding has been celebrated on Sunday, the *chala* must take place on Thursday and vice versa. The bridegroom goes in the company of his *sahbilla* and a party of five or six men of his family and the village, to his wife's house in order to fetch her the following morning. Usually some presents of sweets etc. are also taken for the bride and her people. At night the party is entertained with sumptuous meal and liquor. Next morning they take the bride to the bridegroom's house where she is formally received by her mother-in-law. She, first of all, unveils her, looks into her face and presents an ornament or cash to her. The other women follow suit. In the evening the bride-groom's father gives a feast to the villagers on a small scale. Late at night, when all the persons have gone to bed, the *bhaujis* of the bridegroom conduct the bride to her husband's sleeping apartment where, for the first time, they formally meet for their honeymoon. From the next morning the bride is initiated into the household duties by her mother-in-law, though she is not given heavier responsibilities during her short stay. This time she remains in her husband's home for about a week after which she is again brought back by her father. The second *chala* takes place in the month of May-June after which the wife begins to live permanently with her husband.

Other Forms of Marriage

Besides marriage proper, as described above, there are prevalent among the Tharus a few other forms of contracting matrimonial alliances, such as, *Knj*, *Gharbaita* or *Chutakala*, junior levirate and sororate, polygyny, *Urari* and *Dola*.

Widow Re-Marriage

The Tharus practise widow re-marriage. A widow in the Tharu community can remarry under three conditions or forms:

- (i) She can marry a person not related to her in any way.

- (ii) She can keep a husband as a *gharbaitha*.
- (iii) She can marry her own *dewar*, i. e. the younger brother of her deceased husband, because the customs of junior levirate is prevalent among them.

The independent form of widow re-marriage is more common and ranks only second in order of importance to regular marriage. In both the Tahsils of Khatima and Sitarganj, 86 out of 1,775 total number of marriages were held as widow-remarriage, 32 by levirate and only 20 by *gharbaitha*.

Kaj

Usually it is a widower who marries a widow, but once in a while, even a bachelor may marry her, as he may have no chance of getting an unmarried girl. It differs from regular marriage in several respects. Whereas the proper wedding can only be solemnised on a Sunday or Thursday in the month of *Magh*, the *Kaj* can take place at any time. The latter has no circumambulation rites. Its procedure is as follows :—

The *Panchayat* settles the rate of compensation to be paid by the new husband to the deceased husband's family. Formerly this rate was fixed by the *Panchayat* at rupees 150 but these days it has increased to one thousand or even more. For instance, Kala Singh of Dohara village received a sum of rupees 1,100 as compensation, when Gomati, the widow of his younger brother, was married to another man. The reason is that it is very difficult to secure a wife for a widower because of strict sectional endogamy and the custom of early betrothal. After the agreement being reached by both the parties, the man goes with a party of his relatives and friends to the widow's house on an auspicious day already fixed with her people to take her away to his home on the following morning, because the Tharus believe in the custom of *kaj lai bhai*, that is, after marrying a widow one should run away with her. In this custom, it seems, is reflected a relic of old system of marriage by capture or run-away marriage. Although the woman has her choice in this type of marriage, she has no right to carry away the ornaments

and other valuables belonging to her deceased husband's family except those presented by her parents at her wedding.

After the widow reaches her new husband's house, a feast is given to the people of the village. She now gets the status of a full fledged wife and is entitled to put on bangles and silver rings for the toes, the symbols of wifehood. These are usually put on her by the *Padhaniya* of the village, who gets one rupee and annas four as her reward. Now, the widow-remarriage is performed with more elaborate rites than before. The ideas have been borrowed from the Hindu custom. At first, only a small feast was given when the woman came to live with her husband. But now *hom* ceremony has been added to the performance. On an appointed day all the relatives are invited. The *Bharara* or the Brahmin, if the latter is invited, offers *hom* to the deities where the *Ramayan* is also kept. The custom of circumambulation has been recently added due to the Hindu influence. In this way she is ceremonially adopted by her husband as his wife. Some of the Tharus also feel that the pollution associated with her former husband is also removed by this rite.

The widow and her children enjoy the same legal status as a married wife and her children have. But the widow even after her re-marriage does not enjoy the same social rights. She is not allowed to offer a religious worship like *katha* alone with her husband. This disability is recently imposed on her.

Gharbaitha or Chutakata

Sometimes, a Tharu, instead of bringing the widow to live in his house, himself goes to live with her in the family of her deceased husband. Such a man who is adopted as a husband is called *gharbaitha*, because he makes his home with the widow. The ceremony which consisted in the widow's cutting a wisp of hair from the man's *choti* (top knot) with scissors and wearing it on her person or burying the same underground in the courtyard of her house, is no more in practice. But still the epithet *chutakata* is left behind as a

vestige of the old custom. Such marriages are performed only with a feast if it can be arranged. The *Padhaniya* formally puts on bangles on the widow's wrists to admit her again to the widowhood.

It is a significant fact even today that the *gharbaiṭha* is not the master of the house. The legal status of the children of *gharbaiṭha* for the purpose of inheritance etc. is recognised equal to the children, if any, of the former husband. The eldest son of the deceased husband will get the first preference over his *kakku*, stepfather, and stepbrothers, in all matters. For instance, when Kallu Singh, the *Padhan* of Sujiya village died leaving after him his wife, a daughter and a minor son, Badam Singh. Ram Kali, the widow, married Hari Singh of the same village as a *gharbaiṭha*. The minor son of her former husband was nominated to *Padhanship* and not his step father. The *gharbaiṭha* has no right over his wife's property in her life time, but in case the woman dies without leaving a son, the *gharbaiṭha* would be entitled to acquire her property. Similarly, he would be entitled to his share, if he is dishonestly or unreasonably turned out of the family by his wife or her people. If the *gharbaiṭha* and his wife themselves desire to live in a separate house, they are entitled to get 12 maunds of grain, a plough, a pair of bullocks and a few utensils for cooking. In actual practice, the wife of a *gharbaiṭha* dominates him in a manner despised and condemned by the community. She can turn him out, if she is not satisfied with him. That is why the Tharus do not respect such a form of seeking matrimonial alliance. The only profit, a *gharbaiṭha* finds is that he is not required to pay any compensation to the family of the deceased husband.

Junior Levirate

The Tharus recognise and respect the custom of marrying the wife of one's own deceased elder brother or a cousin. Their sentiments can be gathered from the following proverbial expressions :—

(i) *Ghar ki ghar men rahi*

(The woman has been kept in the same house)

(ii) *Bhauji par latta dal diya.*

(The *dewar* has taken the responsibility to maintain his widow *bhauji*)

The junior levirate is a convenient form of marriage because of the liberties allowed by the social tradition to the *dewar* and *bhauji*. Moreover, the younger brother or the cousin will be saved from expenses in his marriage or from the payment of the compensation. That is why sometimes a woman may be married to two *dewars* in succession. Raghunath of Audali, after deserting his wife, married his elder brother's widow, Rukmani, who was subsequently wedded to Hori, the younger brother of Raghunath after the latter's death. One should not conclude that a widow always marries the younger brother of her deceased husband, because the consent of the woman determines such a union. Mariya of Sisaya village married Bairagi Singh even when her *dewar* wanted to marry her.

Urari

Comparatively speaking, the cases of *urari* (marriage between divorced person) are as numerous as widow-remarriages. This is borne out by the fact that out of 1,775 marriages, 84 were widow-remarriages, whereas 75 cases were marriages between the divorced persons. In spite of the effort of *Jati Sudhar Sabha* to fix the compensation amount from rupees 200 to 400 in the case of *urari*, the practice followed is that the compensation amount is paid according to the demand fixed by the previous husband. When Dharam Singh of Tharu Tisaur married Bandhiya, who had divorced her husband, Mathura Prasad of Pehaniya, he had to pay rupees 800 to her previous husband. Thus only well-to-do Tharus can afford to enter into marriages of this kind; it is beyond the means of the poor. A Tharu, however, prefers to marry a divorced woman to a widow, because the former does not suffer from any social stigma like that of a widow.

Dola

It is the practice of the father or the guardian of a girl giving her to a man for monetary consideration. Such a

disposal of the girl usually takes place at an early age and the amount of cash compensation varies according to the status and bargaining power of the parties. In spite of the fact that this form of marriage is regarded as wholly immoral and unjustifiable by the enlightened Tharus, certain social conditions like abject poverty may force the father or the guardian of the girl to offer her to a man for money. Moreover, greater demand for girls and their far less number than that of the boys are also responsible for contracting marriage alliances for money. Out of 1,775 marriages only 8 cases of the *Dola* marriage have been found in our survey. Kewal Ram could not get a wife for his youngest son, Ram Sarup, for fourteen years. So he brought a bride for Ram Sarup by paying rupees 400 to the girl's father. Ratan Singh of Pehaniya also brought a young girl, Phula, for his son, Mansa Ram, after paying to her father a sum of rupees 1,000. But after a few years Phula divorced her husband and married Bandu Ram of Gurkuriya village, who paid rupees 800 as compensation. In this instance, the *Dola* marriage did not end successfully, because a girl, if sold by her father, may not like her husband. Such marriages, often end in divorce rather than in happy unions. Chedammi's wife brought in the same manner divorced him and married the *Padhan* of Kotra, Raja Ram, who paid rupees 400 to Chedammi for compensation, just equivalent to the sum he paid for her.

Junior Sororate

The custom of marrying the wife's sister after the death of one's wife is one of the most respectful forms of unions among the Tharus, though it is rarely practised by them. Only 8 cases of sororate have been found. The reason for not developing such a convenient form of securing a bride is that the Tharus believe that a person may lose his another daughter, if she is married to the same man whose evil stars were responsible for wife's death. Moreover, in rare cases the younger sister of one's wife may remain unmarried to become the wife of her brother-in-law. When Sandu's wife

died after one year of marriage, he married his wife's sister, Sadaliya, who was fortunately unmarried, because her betrothal was broken due to the death of the boy to whom she was engaged.

Polygyny

Although monogamy is the rule in the Tharu community, polygynous marriages also take place in extraordinary circumstances. The following considerations prevent such matrimonial alliances on a large scale :—

- (1) Scarcity of unmarried or unbetrothed women as well as of widows and divorced women.
- (2) High demand of compensation for a widow or divorced woman by her people.
- (3) Unwillingness of a woman to brook interference with her liberties by a co-wife.

Therefore, we have found only 21 cases of polygyny out of 1,775 marriages which were contracted due to the reasons shown in the following table :—

TABLE XXV

Table Showing the Reasons for Polygynous Marriages

Sl. No.	Name of village	Tahsil	Levi-rate	Barrenness of 1st wife	Physical disability of 1st wife	For the sake of children	Personal satisfaction	Total
1	Sujiya	Khatima	...	...	Blindness	...	...	1
2	Kanjabbagh	"	1	...	...	1	...	2
3	UmaruKalan	"	...	...	...	...	1	1
4	Umaru Khurd	"	...	...	...	1	...	1
5	Kuakheri	"	1	...	...	...	...	1
6	Banusi	"	1	...	...	...	...	1
7	Sunkheri	Sitarganj	...	1	...	...	2	3
8	Sidda Nabadiya	"	1	...	...	...	...	1
9	Patti Khera	"	...	...	...	...	1	1
10	Bawanpuri	"	...	...	...	1	...	1
11	Baghaura	"	...	...	1	...	2	3
12	Nakuliya	"	1	...	...	...	...	1
13	Berkhora	"	...	...	...	...	2	2
15	Bichawa	"	1	...	...	...	1	2
Total			6	1	2	3	9	21

(a) Thus we find that junior levirate has been responsible for 6 polygynous marriages, where a *dewar* (husband's younger brother) has married his *bhauji* (deceased elder brother's wife); while his first wife is living. The reason for such alliances are :

(i) The question of payment does not arise at all, and therefore, it is one of the easiest and cheapest way to get a second wife.

(ii) The woman has lived long enough under the same roof with her *dewar*. She has known him very intimately and has been enjoying a superior position in the family which she may not get if she marries another man.

(iii) Since the *dewar* is privileged to have joking relationship with his *bhauji*, he might have intrigued her into his love even in the life time of his elder brother and hence both of them may not like to part with each other. That was the reason which led Jamman of Banusi village to marry his *bhauji* Ghuma, after her husband's death.

(b) In case of barrenness of his wife, a Tharu may resort to second marriage. Badri Singh has married a widow Bandhia, for the same reason and paid as high as rupees 300 for compensation. Failing to get a child even after four years after his marriage with the first wife he morally justified himself in seeking a second wife.

(c) In a few cases, blindness of the first wife may also compel the husband to take to second marriage, if there is no other woman to look after the domestic work of the family. Ganju, a Gosain Tharu, had to marry a widow, Kaniya, and paid rupees 300 as compensation when his wife lost her eye sight.

(d) A Tharu may resort to second marriage when the issues of his first wife do not survive. Three instances of this type have been found in both the Tahsils of Khatima and Sitarganj. When Bindari's third wife bore him two issues who did not survive, she suggested that he should marry another woman. Thereupon Bindari married a widow, Ram Kali, whose son has survived.

(e) Nine instances out of 21 polygynous marriages were contracted for the sake of personal pleasure where men were

rich enough to maintain more than one wife. Chaman Singh of Sunkheri married two wives for the same reason.

We may conclude that polygynous marriages are contracted because of the custom of levirate, need for more children, sterility, blindness and finally for the sake of personal pleasures. But polygyny may be successful in some cases, while, in others, it fails, and sometimes ends in divorce and disruption of the family. Two wives of Garbu Ram of Baghaura in Sitarganj Tahsil, an educated Tharu and a teacher, are living a life of contentment, because their husband knows how to keep them satisfied and happy. On the other hand, when Bhikka of Umaru Kalan brought a widow, Budhiya, to his house his eldest son, Badala, from his first wife, left him with his family. When Tula Ram of Sujiya village married Jhajjo, a divorced woman of the same village, his first wife, Nathiya, divorced him and married Phuluwa of Sunapahar. When there is more than one wife for a man, the peace of his house is bound to be disturbed as we found in the house of Asiya of Sunkheri village. The old mother Asiya described to us the situation of her home as follows :—

“Three male members in my home have two wives each. When Badri Singh, my own *dewar* married a widow, Bandhiya, his first wife left for her brother and returned to her husband after a period of seven years after she was assured of her superiority to her co-wife. My nephew, Ramman, is also facing the same problem. My own son favours his second wife to the first one, Saddo, and he never takes the latter to Khatima, where he is serving, whereas, the second wife lives with him. He neglects her in the matter of supporting her with clothes and other comforts of life. All this is due to the influence of his second wife who has bewitched my son”.

Divorce

Among the Tharus both the husband and wife may divorce each other. In majority of cases, woman divorces her husband at the slightest excuse, because she enjoys a more dominant position and can find another husband more

easily. Therefore, there are more cases of divorce sought by women than by men. Women have divorced their husbands in 41 out of 47 cases of divorces. On the other hand, a man cannot get a second wife easily. If he manages to get one, he has to pay a large amount of compensation. Therefore, a Tharu has to think carefully before he actually divorces his wife. For instance, Chhote Lal of Sariya Sara said to me "I know that my wife loves another man in the same village. I fear that one of these days she may divorce me. To avoid this situation, I want to leave this village, but whenever I mention this matter to her, she argues back and says, 'we came to this village only two years ago and you are talking of shifting from this place.' My explanations to her that I am burdened with so many debts in this village, because the soil is too sandy to yield a good harvest of paddy, and it is in our best interest to move out from this place, have not made any impression upon her. I am fully aware of the reason of her attachment to this village."

A Tharu woman has always attractive suitors to promise her many presents. This happened in case of Shyam Lal's wife, Parwato, who was assured by Gopi Ram, a resident of her husband's village, that he would give her expensive ornaments and whatever amount of compensation money would be demanded by her previous husband if she would only consent to marry him. Very soon, Parwato began to neglect her husband, and he, becoming aware of her love affair with Gopi Ram, began to illtreat her. In the end, he told his father-in-law, Jwala Parsad, to take his daughter back. The father kept the daughter in his home for two years. In the meantime her love affair with Gopi Ram also developed and it became a scandal in the community, since Jwala Parsad held the position of a teacher and later on that of a manager of the Cooperative Bank at Khatima. He filed a suit against Shyam Lal in the court and levelled the following charges against him :—

- (i) Shyam Lal, the husband of my daughter, Parwato blamed her for bad character and sent her back to my home in July.
- (ii) He has married another woman without informing me.

- (iii) As my daughter is of 21 years of age, I cannot keep her in my house.

The court referred this matter back to the Tharus who appointed a *Panchayat* consisting of Chhote Lal (*sarpanch*), and four *panchas*, Paras Ram, Bikram Singh, Tulsi Ram and Phiru Ram belonging to both sides. Jwala Parsad demanded rupees 2,000 as compensation and fine from Shyam Lal, whereas Shyam Lal and his father, Chilla Ram, put forward their claim of rupees 2,200 as the compensation for marriage expenses. The opinion of *panchas* was in favour of Shyam Lal. They decided that Jwala Parsad, the father of the girl, should pay rupees 1,700 to Shyam Lal, since he made a mistake in keeping his daughter with him and allowed her to carry on illicit relation with Gopi Ram. But the *sarpanch* overruled the *panchas* and finally fixed the sum at rupees 1,650. Jwala Parsad was asked to marry his daughter to anyone else. He approached Gopi Ram to pay the compensation fixed by the *Panchayat* but the latter refused to pay the sum. So, in the end, Parwato was married to Madan Singh of Umaru Khurd who had to pay rupees 2,000 as compensation to Shyam Lal who had cherished a grievance against the decision of the *sarpanch*.

In the following table some interesting reasons are given for divorce :—

TABLE XXVI

Table Showing Reasons for Divorce.

Sl. No.	Reasons of divorce	Tahsil Khatima	Tahsil Sitarganj	Total
1.	Ill-treatment and cruelty of the husband.	14	5	19
2.	Bad character of the husband.	1	—	1
3.	Bad character of the wife.	4	2	6
4.	Impotency of the husband.	2	1	3
5.	Fear of co-wife.	2	1	3
6.	Better prospects of happiness with another husband.	10	5	15
TOTAL		33	14	47

(1) An interesting case which came up before the court filed by Bandiya of Chandpur (Tahsil Khatima) for her divorce from her husband throws light as to the procedure on the part of a woman to obtain a divorce for ill-treatment from her husband. Bandiya lodged a written complaint in the court in these words, "My husband does not satisfy me at all. He is younger than me. He may be impotent, since he has given me no children even after five years of marriage. Now I am eighteen and I cannot continue to live with him. Moreover, my husband's elder brother Ram Nath, also wants to keep me as his wife. I receive all kinds of ill-treatment both at the hands of my husband and his elder brother. Hence, I do not want to live under my father-in-law's roof. If he persuades my father to compromise with my husband and the latter forcibly sends me back to his home, I will run away. In that case, I will find a husband of my own choice. I have brought no ornaments with me from my father-in-law's house except a pair of bangles and ear-rings. In these circumstances I request your honour to allow me to divorce my husband." (Thumb impression of Bandiya)

This application was written out for Bandiya. Here the real reason for her divorce was ill-treatment, though she has made a strong case of impotency in her charges against her husband. As the case was simple, the matter was referred to the *Panchayat* and the court allowed Bandiya to divorce her husband and marry another.

(2) A woman, sometimes, refuses to live with her husband if he loses his reputation and social status in the community due to the offences like theft and murder, consequently imprisonment. But only one instance of this kind was found. Bindara, the daughter of the *Padhan* of Sariya Sara, refused to go to her husband's home, because her father-in-law and husband have been sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for committing thefts.

(3) There are six instances where men have divorced their wives because of their unfaithfulness to them. We found that Bhajji of Sariya Sara divorced his wife, Rania, on account

of her bad character, though he lost the compensation money when she married another person. Pothi Ram of Khetasanda Kham who divorced his wife, Phatiya, was obliged to accept only rupees 50 from Chikariya who married his divorced wife. For this reason, if a husband wants to get rid of his wife he tyrannises her so that she might be encouraged to divorce him and not cause him to divorce her so that he may not lose the compensation.

(4) In three cases, women divorced their husbands, because of their impotency which is given as a cause, when the husband is younger than the wife and she does not conceive. She is not willing to wait for that time till he matures. Jogi Singh of Pehaniya was divorced by his wife for this reason, but such cases are few and far between.

(5) A Tharu woman is by nature possessive and guards her position in her family. She cannot tolerate the interference of a co-wife. When Jagannath of Khetasanda Kham married the wife of his deceased elder brother, his own wife divorced him and married Bahora of Bichawa Village.

(6) In 15 cases the wife divorced her husband, because of his poverty and better prospects of happiness with another husband. Chheddo of Sujiya divorced her husband, Bamman, a Gosain Tharu, who was a landless labourer, and married a land owner Mela Ram of Kanjabagh. In similar circumstances Badaliya of Berkhera divorced her husband, Sahadew, and married Baljit Singh of Naugamanath Bisaunta.

From the account of the marital customs of the Tharus it has been made clear how far they are assimilating the rites and ceremonies of the Hindu community. For instance, they have borrowed the customs of ceremonial circumambulation round the square corresponding to that of the Hindus round the 'holy fire', knotting together the corners of the brides and bridegroom's garments, daubing of their body with turmeric, joining of their hands to symbolize the union, *kanya dan*, the feasting of the bridegroom, similar to the *kalewa* of the Hindus. All these similarities may not, in all cases, indicate borrowing but they definitely point out the influence of Hindu contacts. One can predict that in course of time,

perhaps a few vestiges of Tharu marriages will be replaced by the orthodox Hindu marriage pattern. Even now, the desire on the part of the educated Tharus to perform their marriages according to the Hindu rites by inviting Brahmins points towards transition.

VIII

DEATH AND FUNERAL RITES

The Tharus believe that when a person dies, soul returns to the place from where it came, but they are not so sure of its ultimate destination. According to their belief there are two kinds of death, natural and unnatural. Natural death is accepted as ordained for humanity. Unnatural deaths are caused by the wrath of the evil spirits, gods and goddesses, through the spread of epidemic diseases, such as, cholera and small-pox etc. which take a large toll of human lives, for which the agencies of these deaths must be appeased. The accidental deaths are caused by attacks of wild animals and snake-bite etc. and these are also considered unnatural.

It was not the custom of the Tharus to place the body of the dying person on the ground to breathe his last, but now they do it after the custom of Hindus. When a person is dying, either the son or the wife or some other member of the family pours a little water into the mouth and places a silver or copper coin to hasten the end, for, in swallowing these the dying person is choked.

In case of a death of a male, a son or a brother in the family performs the rites of removing his clothes, anointing the body with *ghee* and turmeric and wrapping the body in a white shroud (be it new or old). In case of a female, all the clothes and ornaments, such as, necklaces, armlets etc. are removed by mother-in-law, mother or some elder woman of the family. Then follows the anointing and dressing of the body and wrapping of it in a coloured shroud. During this time the men remain outside and women gather round the corpse and raise their voices loud in weeping and wailing.

Just before going to the burial ground, the body is placed on a cot on which a *dari* is spread. The cot must be placed in an easterly and westerly direction at the front door of the house. The friends and relatives gather round it to mourn over it and usually women and children beat their breasts and heads while they wail aloud but the elderly people do their duty in consoling them.

The object of performing the funeral rites appears to be to get rid of the death pollution and to appease the departed spirit so that it would not haunt or hurt the survivors. Hence, on the cot is placed an earthen lamp near the head of the corpse. A bundle of old clothes tied in a piece of cloth together with one or two seers of rice and two rupees are placed on the cot in order to facilitate this last journey. Then four men lift up the cot in the midst of weeping and wailing, bear it on their shoulders to carry it to the burial or cremation ground. On the way the relatives, friends and representatives from the village, who form the procession lend their shoulders in turn to show their mark of affection and respect in carrying the dead body. They also carry with them an iron sickle, an axe and a spade which may be used for digging the grave and for cutting the thorny branches for covering it, but more for the purpose of scaring away the malevolent spirits who, they suppose, hover about the corpse all the way to the cremation ground.

The body is carried on the cot with its head in the direction in which the procession is proceeding but as soon as the party reaches the boundary line of the village, the position of the cot is reversed so that if it should turn into an evil spirit, it may lose its way to the village.

Methods of Disposal of the Dead

The Tharus were accustomed to bury their dead as described by A. C. Turner¹ and D. N. Majumdar² but now-a-days the custom of burial is falling into disuse and cremation is the common practice among the Tharus. The custom of burning

1. Loc. Cit., p. 602

2. Loc. Cit., p. 106

has come into use fairly recently since the Tharus have identified themselves with the Hindus. There are very few cases of burial. Women who die at child birth; and small children and also those who die an unnatural or accidental deaths, such as, from cholera, small-pox or mauled by wild animals, snake-bite and drowning are buried. The reason for burying persons dying of cholera and other infectious disease is that the Tharus believe that by burying, the contagion might be checked, whereas by cremation it will be diffused by the wind and will be spread more rapidly. Again, since epidemic diseases are sent by the goddesses *Bhawani* and *Durga Mata*, the act of burning the dead whom they claim as their victims, might offend them, and further enrage them to do more harm.

Burial

When the processionists reach the burial ground near a river, the bearers carrying the cot place it on the ground. Only male mourners accompany the dead body to the burial ground. Some of them begin to dig a grave near the bank of the river, at least waist deep, three feet wide and six feet long. Now the father, brother or husband (the chief mourner), as the case may be, takes a bath, bathes the dead body, shrouds it and takes it round the grave three times before laying it down into it with its head towards the south. The bundle of his old clothes, rice and money, brought with the corpse is placed by its side—a survival of the ancient custom when the personal possessions of the dead were buried along with the body. Then the chief mourner who has bathed the corpse throws first a little clod of earth into the grave with his hands and other mourners follow suit. Before they close up the grave, they place in it some small thorny branches of plum tree to prevent the wild animals exhuming the corpse.

Cremation

For cremation, a funeral pyre is built by the relatives but the first log of wood must be placed by the chief mourner. After bathing the corpse as in the case of burial, he makes

three circumambulations with the corpse, places it on the pyre and lights it with a faggot. Like the Hindus they have also begun to throw some *ghee* and sandal wood powder in the pyre. After fire is lighted, small logs of wood are placed by all the mourners to pay their last homage to the departed soul. They keep on adding logs of wood till the body is consumed.

When the body has been disposed of either by burial or cremation, all the mourners take their bath in the river. Thereafter the chief mourner makes a *putari* or an effigy of *Kusa* grass and pours out some water over it and asks the rest to do the same out of respect for the dead. After this ritual all of them take a second purificatory bath and start for their village in a file without looking back towards the grave or funeral pyre. On the way back they dig the ground at seven places with their axes and place thorny branches in the holes all along their way. They also throw small balls of earth after whirling them round their heads either five or seven times. They explain that they want to put all kinds of obstacles in the path of the ghost of the deceased and finally to prevent it from coming back to find a haunt in their village to hurt the inhabitants, had it borne any grudge against any one of them. Although no one has actually seen a ghost following them, a number of *Bhararas* have told me that sometimes a ghost which has been responsible for the death of the deceased, assumes its figure to horrify and trouble the processionists and other people.

On reaching the house of the deceased the mourners sit in a line for a while before returning to their respective houses, where they find a mug of water and a piece of burning wood placed in the courtyard by their womenfolk. The water is poured over the thatch, and must be collected in another mug by the men who have attended the funeral rites. They sprinkle this water over their hands and feet, jump across the fire and only then cross the threshold of their houses. The same procedure of purification is also repeated at the deceased's house. Thereafter the women from the family of the deceased go to a river to take their bath, make an effigy of grass, sprinkle water over it and return home.

In the evening or in the afternoon of the same day the chief mourner carries a leaf-plate of rice pudding, *Khira* and an earthen mug of water to the southern boundary of the village to place them there and hurries back home without glancing back at it. The Tharus believe that for three days after the cremation or burial, the spirit of the deceased visits the house and the village. Therefore, it is necessary to give it its share of daily food until the purification ceremony is performed, lest it should be offended and might harm the family.

Calling Back the Shadow of the Deceased

On the night when a death has occurred, the women clean the room where the person had breathed his last. Here, they spread the ashes on the clean floor. The ashes are covered by a sieve upon which is placed a burning earthen lamp, and finally all these things are covered by a basket of bamboo. The doors of the room are closed for the whole night. Very early in the next morning the members of the family search for the supposed footprints in the ashes to know in what form the spirit of the deceased has taken its rebirth. If the footprints resemble that of a human being, they believe that the deceased will have its rebirth in the same village.

Purification From the Death Pollution

The death pollution and taboos associated with it remain with the relatives of the deceased for four days, though some of them, like the Hindus, have extended it to ten days. During this period members of the deceased's family are tabooed to rub oil on their bodies, to shave or pare their nails and to eat fish or meat. It is on the fourth day that the bones and ashes of the cremated corpse are collected by the chief mourner and are kept by him in two different earthen pots. The pot containing the bones is buried just outside the village boundary under a *neem* or a *pipal* tree and the other containing the ashes is immersed in some river. More Hinduized among the Tharus immerse them in the holy river Ganges. The

chief mourner, other male members of the family and *kunaba* (blood relatives) get their heads shaven by some one of their own community. If possible, they call for a Hindu barber who can be had in those villages which are close to the Tahsil headquarters. After shave they take a bath in a river. This is followed by a ceremonial feast known as *chhoti roti* given to the relatives and the inhabitants of the village. Different varieties of food are cooked on hearth which has not been used before. Meat and fish constitute special menu in the feast, and liquor is served to the guests, if the family can afford it. To this are also invited all those who took part in the funeral ceremony. On this occasion each kind of food is placed on a *patari* (leaf plate) for the departed spirit. The chief mourner then places one morsel of food from his *patari* on which all the guests must also keep one morsel from their own food. These two *pataries* together with a burning earthen lamp are placed on the spot where the person had died, because they believe that the spirit will return and taste the meals thus served to it. Lest it might fight shy in returning to the place it has once departed from, the chief mourner carries these *pataries* of food along with a few feathers of fowls and the clippings of hair towards the southern boundary of the village.

Barshi Ceremony

The next feast must come on the following Diwali¹ when the Tharus once again call back the spirit of the deceased. Khunka Tharus and those who are following Hindu customs have dispensed with this ceremony, but the majority still maintain that the soul does not find final rest until *Barshi* is celebrated. In case of young children who die at the age of three or four the *Barshi* or *Patri jimauni*, as they call it, takes place a week after the funeral rites, because the Tharus believe that the soul of the children is very tender and weak and is put to a great hardship and suffering, if this ceremony is delayed. In case of adolescents and adults, whether

1. Refer to author's article 'The Diwali Among The Tharus,' *Man in India*, Vol. 29, No. 1. pp. 29-35

married or unmarried, the *Barshi* is an important ceremony to be observed with special rites. All the relatives, friends and specially the participants in the funeral rite who are not going to observe this ceremony at their own places, are invited to take part in it. The invitees think that it is obligatory for them also to attend the ceremony and bring one seer of rice, pulses, vegetables, spices, salt to contribute to the expenses.

In the morning of *Diwali* day women busy themselves in cleaning and replastering the floor of the house with cowdung. A canopy of cloth is stretched over the courtyard. The members of the family and blood relatives get their heads clean-shaven. In one corner of the courtyard women cook all day long different varieties of food including specially the favourite dishes of the deceased, to be served at the feast in the evening. In the afternoon it is now the turn of the inhabitants of the village to contribute to the family of the deceased one seer of rice, half a seer of pulses, vegetables, salt as their *chhaki* (contribution). Now under the *mandawa* five burning earthen lamps are placed on five new pitchers which have been filled with water by women. Two *pataries* containing all the varieties of cooked food are specially served for the deceased and are placed near the pitchers. A basket packed with *kajal*, oil, comb and mirror, a glass of liquor and a copy of *Ramayan* (if the deceased was literate and could read it), *dhol* and *jhanjh* are kept under the *mandawa*. Here the *panchhariya*¹ makes an effigy of *kusa* grass and the members of the family and blood relatives gather round with flowers in their hands. The *panchhariya* pours water over the *putari*, while others throw the flowers. Thereafter starts the feast in which the *panchhariya* is the first person to be served and then the rest of the guests are given their food. Two *pataries* are again taken out in the manner as we have described before in the *chhoti roti*. After the feast is over, the *panchhariya* carries all the four *pataries* of food served in the name of the spirit of the deceased, along with an earthen vessel of water, one hen, one goat and

1. The *panchhariya* is he who has been performing this ceremony, no matter he is a blood relative or not.

clippings of shaven hair to the southern boundary of the village. He leaves them there except the hen and the goat which are to be eaten by the guests as the *julha*, left-over of the deceased spirit. This is known as *juthera* ceremony.

Now once more two *pataries* of food are placed under the cover of a *basket* under the *mandawa* where seven or five sticks of sugarcane are kept and a suit of new clothes is hung over them. A cot with a bed is also placed there to provide rest to the spirit of the deceased. Thereafter, the dancer, *nachakuiya*, begins his dance that lasts for the whole night. The Tharus believe that the spirit of the deceased will definitely visit their house. These dances and songs are arranged in order to please the spirit and to give it solace and comfort. The dancer is supposed to entertain the spirit. The songs sung to the accompaniment of *miradang* and *jhanjh* are full of gloomy forebodings describing the transitory nature of this world. The dancer begins his dance with a song indicating how the soul flew away from the body making it useless.

Bihagaro

Oh *Hansa*¹ which forest do you live in?

Hansa flew away, the cage is vacant.

Who has deserted my village?

Four relatives have taken away the corpse.

Take it away soon, do not delay.

Place it on the bank of the Jamuna river.

Burn it into ashes just like Hori.

In the following song the dancer asks the spirit about the purpose of its visit:—

Bihagaro

Why have you come, oh bird,² after leaving my village in despair?

When you were born, there was happiness all round.

1. A kind of bird, compared with the soul.

2. The soul has been compared to bird.

Four or five women sang together the auspicious songs when you were born.

When you were young, you played with boys, then old age followed.

You were attacked with cough and cold, you lost all hopes of life.

The messengers of *Jam*¹ came to take you away and began to break your bones.

Beating hammers and taking life out of you they carried you to *Jam*.

Four relatives took you on their shoulders covering you with a shroud.

Collected wood from the forests and burnt you just like Hori.

When *nachakaiya* dances and sings these songs he avows the presence of the spirit and indicates the possession of the spirit by his gestures. When his identity with the spirit is established, as he imagines himself, he does not worry the spirit by queries but appeals to it to take rest as described in the following song:—

Sanjha

Oh bird; rest a while. In what form have you come?

Of what your *jhagiya* and cap are made; what is your vehicle?

Silken are your *jhagiva* and cap, the horse is your vehicle. *Jhagiya* and cap are hanging on the sugarcanes, your bed is decorated with flowers.

In a golden plate your food is served and *ghee* trickles from above.

Not only the dancer is filled with an ecstasy of emotions but all those present there catch his spirit. The whole atmosphere at this moment is awful and uncanny. Then comes the lull when they feel the arrival of the dawn because the spirit cannot be detained any more. The dancer gives vent to this feeling in the Kaphi song.

1. The God of Death.

Kaphi

The bird has deserted its abode.

I am no more related to a family or a clan, no one is dear to me.

Accept my Ram Ram, no one is dear to me.

The Tharus thus believe that they have been successful in calling back the spirit which shall find its rest now. Very early in the morning the *panchhariya* removes the clothes from the sugarcane. He carries *khir* and two *pataries* of food to a river and immerses them in it. On his way back to his village he dare not look back lest he should be frightened by the spirit. He is fed with a sumptuous meal and other guests are also served food. At night every one keeps awake with the fear that the spirit might return if it might have been dissatisfied in any way. The dancer entertains the guests and helps them to keep awake throughout the night by his singing and dancing. He is free to sing any song except Holi songs but those with philosophical ideas are specially preferred on this occasion.

Bihagaro

The world is a wonderful fair.

You will come and go alone, your soul wanders alone.

In the world of death there are fairs you go to these fairs.

You have made a round of the fair here, now the fair of heaven follows.

Next morning the *Barshi* comes to an end with a final feast. The *mandawa* is taken out at night when the moon comes up. The women of the family of the deceased remove clothes, bed, and pitchers etc. and place them on the western boundary of the village but before dawn they fetch back all the things except the pitchers which they break there.

The attitude of the Tharus to the spirit of the deceased, as we have seen, is one of fear and reverence. That is the reason why they do everything in their power to appease the spirit and help it to find its final resting place.

The Soul after Death

The Tharus like the Hindus have developed an implicit faith in the transmigration of soul and its existence after death. This belief finds its expression in a ritual at which they try to read in the ashes whether the spirit is to be reborn as a bird, an animal or a human being. The general belief about rebirth which has been borrowed from the Hindus is that the soul incarnates in a form dependent upon the actions of man in his former life. If a person has been good to others, he will be born in a human form, otherwise he will be reborn as an animal or a bird and worst of all, he may become an evil spirit after his death and may harm his own kith and kin. The spirit of the person killed by a tiger or other wild animals generally becomes a ghost. In Bara village a Tharu *Bharara* who was killed by a tiger is alleged to have turned into a ghost who is popularly known as *Bagha Bhut*.

Such are the funeral rites of the Tharus who have, through many years, developed, adopted and assimilated the customs of the Hindus. Besides, precautions and devices against the tendency of the departed spirit to haunt the survivors, the funeral rites of the Tharus include measures designed to give rest to the departed soul and to find out its rebirth in this world. The death rites, as we have seen, are followed by ceremonial purification of the survivors and of the house, and the termination of the death taboos and re-assimilation of the survivors into the tribe by a common meal with the members of community.

IX

THARU RELIGION

In the ethnographic literature of the Tharus little attention has been paid to religion. Crooke¹ and Knowles² have briefly described the religion of the Tharus based on a belief in ghosts, demons and the spirits of the dead whom they fear. Knowles speaks of the Tharus as worshipping *Mahadew* and possessing some idea of a Supreme Being known as *Narayan* who gives them sunshine, rain and harvests but the Tharus are said to be ignorant of any ritual worship. Majumdar³ has drawn our attention to the fact that the contact with the Hindus has enabled the Tharus to include the worship of *Satyanaryan* and a few other Hindu gods and goddesses in their religion. While going deeper into the study of the present religious practices of the Tharus one is impressed with the rapidly growing number of gods and goddesses borrowed from the Hindu pantheon; and Muslim *Pirs*, saints and Sikh *Gurus* find a place along with the worship of the spirits and ghosts. These Hindu gods, Muslim saints and Sikh *Gurus* receive as much reverence as is accorded to the indigenous pantheon of the Tharus. At the same time education is leading some enlightened minds to depart from the faith in their tribal spirits and even in the worship of gods and goddesses.

A systematic approach to Tharu religion is to study deeply their ancient beliefs and to deal with those aspects that are now leading them to include in their tribal worship deities and saints of other religions.

1. Crooke, Loc. cit., p. 369.

2. Loc. cit., p. 214.

3. Majumdar, Loc. cit., p. 108.

Tharu Deities and Spirits

According to their original belief the Tharus have tried to make a distinction between benevolent and malevolent spirits. The benevolent spirits have to be approached with prayers and supplications and offerings, whereas the malevolent spirits or forces have to be controlled, averted or exorcised by spells, threats and other methods of white or black magic. Some of these spirits receive regular offerings according to seasons and times, while others are to be placated by casual sacrifices, if they cause repeated misfortune, sickness or damage to agriculture. As a last recourse, if certain outstanding benefits are derived from the spirits or the excesses of malevolent spirits can not be brought under control, these are installed as family gods to appease them. Thus the *Pachhauwan*, the benevolent spirit and *Kharga Bhut* (evil spirit) have found their place among the family gods of the Tharus. The powers and forces of Nature, in accordance with their beneficence and harmfulness have also been included in the tribal worship. The hill and jungle spirits are still propitiated by the Tharus.

Hill Spirits

The powers and forces of Nature which the Tharus have personified and propitiated are mostly those of their immediate environment. Thus they recognise the spirits of one or more prominent hills near their settlements. These spirits are identified by the hill on which they are believed to preside and to be its guardian spirit. There are two such well known hill spirits, namely, *Parwatiya* and *Punyagiri* which belonged to the ancient creed of the religion of the Tharus.

(a) *Parwatiya* is a goddess which resides in the Hinglaj Hills, a part of the Himalayas. When the goddess *Parwatiya* is offended she inflicts people with sickness. She can be easily appeased by an ordinary offering of *hom*. In some villages she has been included in the family pantheon. Dhani of Sujiya village has given a permanent place to *Parwatiya* among his family gods, and makes to her periodical offering of *hom*.

(b) *Punyagiri* is supposed to live in the northern hills not very far from the Tharu settlements. *Punyagiri* is the most dangerous hill spirit which instils people with awe and reverence. She is believed to be fond of children, and if she is offended, the children suffer from chronic illness and become anaemic. Children hardly survive her attack. Some of the Tharus also propitiate her along with other spirits when she persists on inflicting diseases on the children of a family. For this reason Lala Ram of Sujiya village was advised by the *Bhararas* to include her in his family pantheon so that his children in future may be saved from her wrath.

Jungle Spirits

Banaspati is supposed to reside on a pile of branches which have been ceremonially collected for many years at a distance of two miles from Alabirdi village towards the north. The Tharus have not included this spirit in their family pantheon. But whenever they happen to pass through this part of the forest they at once place a branch of tree on her as a token of their respect for her.

Arimal or *Bharamal* is another jungle spirit represented by a pile of stones collected by the visitors for a very long time. It is believed to reside not very far from *Banaspati*. The visitors place a stone on the pile whenever they happen to pass that way. When cattle go astray, the Tharus make a promise to the spirit that they will offer one rupee and annas four worth of sweets and a smoke to her, if they succeed in finding their lost cattle. She is quite popular with the Tharus as she delivers the goods, and is frequently propitiated by them. Bhagora of Alabirdi village lost a pair of bullocks while he had let them loose for grazing. He promised the required offering and after a week he found them out. This was taken as a proof for the efficacy of the spirit. But failure to fulfil one's promise after achieving success may bring about a heavier loss to the offender. Therefore, he has to be prompt in fulfilling his promise and making his offering to the spirit.

One does not know what will happen to these spirits if forests are cleared as they have been in Sitarganj tahsil, because no jungle spirit is found there.

Village Goddess

On the outskirts of every village towards the east is to be found the *than* of the village goddess *Bhumsen* collectively representing all the gods, goddesses and spirits under a *pipal* or a *nim* tree. Each *Bhumsen* consists of a mound of earth on which other deities are ceremonially installed in smaller mounds by a *Bharara* of the village. The main deities to be represented in the *Bhumsen* are seven mother goddesses, namely, *Durga*, *Kalka*, *Sitala*, *Jwala*, *Purwati*, *Hulaka* and *Purwa*, the chief village deity *Nagarai* and two other powerful spirits, *Kharga* and *Pachhauwan*. It appears that the preponderance of the female deities represented in the *Bhumsen* may be taken as a sign of female dominance in Tharu community. Sometimes, a spirit known as *Pachapakariya* is also given a place in the *Bhumsen* with the purpose of averting all the dangers of the dacoits and thieves. The Tharus believe that the spirit, *Pachapakariya*, will never allow the dacoits to attack the village, and even if they do so, they will fail in their attempt to plunder it. Naugamanath Bisaunta is one of those fortunate villages, which are protected by this spirit and for this reason it has never been attacked by any dacoit thus far. The reason why all those deities are put together on one spot is that it is neither possible nor can an ordinary Tharu afford to worship all of them individually. The inhabitants of a village, therefore, collectively offer periodical sacrifices and *hom* to protect them from all evil influences of malevolent spirits and ghosts. But any individual Tharu is free to include any one of these goddesses and spirits in his family pantheon. *Nagarai*, for example, which is believed to be the protective goddess of the village, is included in the family pantheon of the inhabitants and the *Padhan* must include her as the custodian of village community and its protection.

Although the village goddess, *Bhumsen*, is definitely an ancient presiding deity of the village, the inclusion of seven

goddesses of the Hindus and *Pachapakariya*, a Muslim saint, seems to be of recent times since the contacts of the Tharus developed with the Hindus and the Muslims. We also find that the number of the deities and spirits is not the same in all the villages nor in all the Tharu houses.

Ancestor Spirits

As the Tharus have faith in the soul or spirit as distinct from the body, it is very natural that certain disembodied human spirits are propitiated by them. We have already seen in the preceding chapter that the Tharus, in general, make it a point to call back the departed soul on the *Barshi* day lest it may prove hostile to them. The spirits to be thus personified and deified are naturally those of their own dead ancestors. The Tharus, therefore, propitiate their ancestor spirits, known as *Budhe Babu* or *Niradhar*. They instal these spirits inside the house as they believe that they will protect the inmates of the house from the evil influence of lesser spirits. They have precedence over other spirits and must be given their offerings of *hom* on every important religious feast, festival and social ceremonies. On occasions of illness in the family, prayers are offered and vows are made to them. When the children weep continuously for a day or two, they say that *Budhe Babu* is fondling with them. The mothers take their children to the place of *Budhe Babu* to make an offering of rice to it. It is their invariable experience that the children stop crying with offering.

Spirits of the Cattle-Shed

The Tharus, as a rule, worship spirits of the cattle-shed, known as, *Karodew* and *Rakat Kaluwa* which protect their cattle from various diseases and dangers from being killed by tigers. Of late, they have added *Miyan Mohamada*, a Muslim saint, to their old spirits presiding over their cattle and cattle-shed. No animal sacrifices are offered to these spirits; only an offering of sweets and *puries* is made to them in the month of July. It is the duty and the privilege of the head

of the family alone to make the offering to the spirits of the cattle-shed.

Spirits of Dead Heroes (Mudhero)

Besides these spirits, the Tharus have included in their religion the spirits of those persons who were well known *Bhararas* in their life. There have been two reputed *Bhararas* who died of accidents and have been given a status of *Mudhero* in the Tharu religion, since they have turned out to be the spirits of great help in their own region. *Pachhauwan* or *Kusmatiya* and *Kharga*, as they are known, have stories of their origin; the most popular versions are these:—

(a) *Kusmatiya*: There was once a village Kusmat in the pargana of Kilpuri in Sitarganj Tahsil. No trace of this village is to be found now except in a few old stones and bricks which are lying there. It is overgrown with forest known as 'the jungle of *Kusmat*'. In this once flourishing village there lived a *Bharara* who had his control over it. Because of lack of cooperation of the goddess *Bhumsen* with him, people began to die in large number of cholera, small-pox and other epidemics. He tried his level best to worship the goddess and supplicate her with offerings and sacrifices but nothing could appease the *Bhawani*. The *Bharara* was frustrated and in utter despair went so far as to offer his own head to the goddess and to besiege her to save the people of his village. He cut off his head but the goddess, it is said, caught it with her own hands before it fell on the ground. So now *Kusmatiya* always accompanies the goddess *Bhawani* and all her sisters and is popularly known as the chief commander of their respective armies¹. Some of the Tharus call the spirit *Pachhauwan* as he comes from the west. The remarkable thing about him is that the inhabitants of Kilpuri and Nanakmata parganas on the other side of the river Deoha propitiate him as a benevolent spirit but the people of Bilheri pargana consider him to be an evil

1. All the seven sisters of *Bhawani* are believed to have their own armies (*Lashkars*). Whenever they attack the people, they go with their respective armies.

spirit. In any case, since he is supposed to be directly associated with the goddesses, he receives periodical sacrifices along with other goddesses to give favours to the people.

Palta, the *Bharara*, of Rampura village informed the author that *Kusmatiya* killed his beloved *Subiya* by means of his supernatural power after he offered his head to the goddess. Now he lives with his beloved in the jungle of *Kusmat*. That is why one sees the light in that forest at night. At times a dance is also arranged by him to entertain his beloved. The popular belief of the *Bharara* is that when *Kusmatiya* does not come under their control, they bribe his beloved to persuade him to do the needful. They have told us that *Kusmatiya* is one of these spirits, which is easily approachable even by an ordinary person. If he promises to sacrifice a goat or a fowl in the honour of the spirit, his desire is fulfilled by *Kusmatiya*. He can turn a person insane or kill him if he fails to offer the spirit a sacrifice he has promised. A woman of Kotra Nausa has become mad as she failed to offer the sacrifice after she attained her desire of becoming a good singer.

(b) Another spirit is *Kharga* who in his life was a well known *Bharara*, named Kharg Singh of Bilheri Pargana. He earned a name for his magical powers and control over spirits both good and evil and has his supervision over twelve villages. Once he was invited to a feast by his maternal uncle who was declared a *Barwayak*¹ by the people. When Kharg Singh began to take his meal he saw an earthen pot full of curd. He asked his maternal aunt to give him some curd, but she refused it by saying 'it is specially meant for your uncle, and not for you'. Kharg Singh lost his temper and turned the curd into insects and went away. After some time when *Barwayak* came to take his meal his wife brought the pot of curd for him. When he looked at

1. *Barwayak* is he who happens to kill a cow or a bullock by accident. This is believed to be the greatest sin for the Tharus. The offender is excommunicated until he goes through a purification bath in some holy river and gives a feast as a penalty to the members of his community. The first person to take meals is a *Bharara*.

it, it was nothing but insects. He at once suspected Kharg Singh as the agent of this mischief. Thereupon he tied Kharg Singh to a tree in the jungle close to his village. After some time, Kharg Singh felt very thirsty and asked for water from a *Baradiya*, the herdsman who said to him, 'I am afraid of you. I would fetch water for you if you promise not to hurt me'. Kharg Singh agreed to the request and *Baradiya* brought the water for him. After taking some water in his palm he chanted some *mantras* to call upon a tiger to kill his uncle, but his own magic unfortunately went against him with the result that the tiger killed him and also the *Baradiya*. Both of them ultimately turned into spirits. Now they live together. *Kharga* seldom tyrannises over the people of Bilheri where he is believed to be a benevolent spirit but he is a terror to the people across the Deoha river. He is said to be most mischievous spirit but whenever he is in good mood, he brings happiness to the people, though he is not as beneficial as *Kusmatiya*. Often the *Bhararas* approach *Kusmatiya*, to drive *Kharga* away. They also bribe *Baradiya*, the companion of *Kharga*, to influence him to win his favour.

Tiger Spirits

The Tharus believe that the persons who die in accidents turn out to be spirits after their death. So the persons killed by tigers are known as *Bagha Bhuts* (tiger spirits). These spirits receive their offerings whenever they kill men and cattle or cause diseases. There are a number of *Bagha Bhuts* but the best known among them is *Nauto* of Bara, who was once a famous *Bharara* of Bara village and who was killed by a tiger. He beats all those who attend to his victim. He is supposed to be a friend of *Kusmatiya* who has a great influence over him.

Minor Mischievous Spirits of the Dead, Bhuts, Churelins and Masani.

There are certain spirits of the dead whom the Tharus fear most, as they attack people and inflict pains over them quite

often. These, therefore, need to be avoided, exorcised and controlled. Common among these numerous spirits are *Bhawani Padhan* of Nausari village and *Khaddal* of Pipaliya. The former was murdered on account of the rivalry over the love of a woman in his village and the latter also died accidentally. *Chureline* and *Masani* are the evil spirits of women dying in pregnancy or child birth. All these spirits are propitiated only when they hurt people, though they have no power to kill them.

Spirits, Gods, Goddesses, Pirs and Saints of other Communities.

Besides the cult of the dead spirits of their own tribe, the Tharus have also added to their religious worship the spirits, gods, goddesses and saints of other communities, namely, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, including a few spirits of lower castes. One of the spirits belongs to depressed caste, *Chamar*, which has left a great impression on the minds of the Tharus about its witchcraft and sorcery, since the *Chamars*, for long, have been associated with magic. One of the most popular stories about a *Chamar* magician, Pahlad Bhagat of Paliya village, is still current in the Tharu community. It is said that he used to cut down large trees and carried them home by his magic. Once a few families of a wandering tribe, Nat, came and pitched their tents in his village. These people were also well known for their magic and, therefore, they were very much feared by the Tharus and their neighbours. The Nats heard from people that Pahlad Bhagat of Paliya was a great magician; so they intended to test his art. When they went to his house to see him, they did not find him there but they saw a *dhimari* (a fishing trap with holes) filled with water. They emptied the water magically kept in the trap and also killed his son. His wife ran to her husband, Pahlad, in the fields where he was working, and reported the incident. He left his plough and hurried home and found his son killed by the Nats. He at once brought a skin of a deer and began to twist it and recite some *mantras*.

He asked Nats to bring life to his son or else he would kill all of them. Unfortunately, they failed to restore him to life and fell upon Pahlad's feet and begged him to spare their lives. He asked them to give five strokes on their drums on his behalf before they would show their feats. These Nats obeyed his orders and were let off. Thereafter he brought his son to life himself by his own magic. But after his accidental death, Pahlad was turned into an evil spirit. Now he troubles the Tharus unless they escape by offering him a smoke.

Some of the famous gods of the Hindu religion, such as, *Pandawa*, *Mahadew*, *Nar Singh* are gradually being incorporated in their family pantheon. *Mahadew* of the Hindus is believed by the Tharus as a god of destruction—an idea borrowed from the Hindus. *Nar Singh* is a mythical incarnation of God *Vishnu* who took this ferocious form to punish the king, Hrna Kashyap, who thought himself greater than *Vishnu* and was torturing his devotees. When he tyrannised over his own son, Prahlad, and enjoined him that the latter was never to utter the name of God *Vishnu*, *Nar Singh* killed him.

Among Muslim *Pirs* and saints, *Bala Pir* is very much revered by the Tharus. Some people, like Jugana of Alabirdi have given a place to this Muslim *Pir* in their family pantheon.

Guru Nanak of the Sikhs is also worshipped by the Tharus but they have not included him in their family gods, because they have not developed much contact with them.

The Supreme God

The belief in a Supreme Being *Thakur* or the Hindu God, *Bhagwan*, is a recent development among the Tharus. But they have not developed an abstract philosophy of God as creating, governing, destroying and recreating the universe as believed by the Hindus. They consider *Thakur*, the Supreme Deity too distant and usually too benevolent to do any harm to mankind. Hence His worship with prayers, supplications and offerings appear to be less urgent, and the rituals are

also not too elaborate, though in their minds, there exists a definite idea as to the attributes of *Bhagwan* and his high position among the Hindu gods and goddesses and other spirits which they have installed in their houses. For this reason no Tharu includes *Thakur* in his family pantheon unless he celebrates a kind of *yajna* performed by a Brahmin who ceremonially installs Him along with other gods in the open courtyard of his house. That is why one does not come across *Thakur* in every house even though the householder may have a great belief in Him. Again, the Tharus have not given Him any place in the *Bhumsen*, since they have not established a direct communion with Him. They also believe that God whose cult is connected with a civilisation definitely superior to theirs naturally impresses them as the greatest of the deities and spirits so far known to them.

Hierarchy of Spirits, Gods and Goddesses in the Tharu Religion.

The hierarchy of the Tharus' gods, spirits and deities is based upon the respective degrees of beneficence attached to each of them. The Supreme Deity is *Thakur*, the creator, who looks after their general welfare and well-being. He is worshipped with a great reverence, affection and regard, though he is considered too high for direct and intimate communion with the Tharus. Next comes the *Bhumsen* which keeps a guard over the village and saves the people from all calamities and looks after their welfare and happiness. The ancestor spirits, as a rule, watch over the family to which they belong. The hill and the jungle spirits are among the benevolent ones with the exceptions of *Parwatiya* and *Punyagiri*. Then the spirits of the dead heroes, *Kusmatiya* and *Kharga* are regarded very powerful spirits both for good and evil, though the former is known more for his good influence than the latter. *Karodew* or *Rakat Kaluwa* and *Miyan Mohommada*, the spirits of the cattle-shed, are the sole protectors of their cattle. They are very friendly spirits and seldom bring any disease and disaster to their cattle. The evil

spirits, *bhuts*, *churelins*, and their like are believed to visit the Tharus only with calamities in order to extort sacrifices from them. The benevolent spirits, gods and goddesses are then invoked upon to foil the evil designs of these malevolent and lesser spirits. The benevolent spirits, gods and goddesses are kept in good humour by offering regular and periodical sacrifices, only with the exception of *Thakur* who does not demand many sacrifices and offerings. So far as the idea of beneficence attached to the *Muslim pirs* and *Sikh gurus* is concerned, the Tharus look to these for their personal favours and gains.

Attitude of the Tharus to the Worship of Tribal Spirits and Deities.

From the above description of the spirits and deities we find that the dominant factor in the religious faith of the Tharus is a belief in the spiritual beings who control and influence the destinies of man and with whom their own *Bhararas* can enter into personal relations through appropriate religious and magical rites and rituals. But they have now absorbed into their religion a large number of alien deities, such as, they discovered them in the hope of furthering their happiness and prosperity. That is how their pantheon is exceedingly varied and elastic, even it differs from village to village, house to house, and family to family. They worship everything they can in order to be protected from all kinds of unforeseen harms and dangers. Thus a large number of their gods, goddesses and other deities are comparatively of modern times and have been imported as the result of Hindu, Sikh and Muslim contacts. It is only hill spirits, jungle spirits, ancestor spirits, *Bhuts* and *Churelins*, *Mudhero* and tutelary spirits of the cattle-shed which are ancient and fundamental to their tribal and indigenous beliefs. The mother goddesses like *Bhawani* really belong to a comparatively higher level of culture and are borrowed from the Hindus. With their closer contact with the Hindus, and advance of education their conception of the Supreme Deity appears to have become more refined and elevated

than it might have been before. Furthermore, the inclusion of Muslim *pirs* and Sikh *gurus* in their tribal worship has widened their contacts and brought them closer to these communities. Therefore a comparison of the different spirits and deities, both old and new, indigenous and borrowed, benevolent and malevolent brings home to us the progressive development of religious realm of the Tharus, which is toned up with their economic and social progress. This development seems to have been partly influenced by religious ideas of their more civilised neighbours specially the Hindus. Consequently, the imprint of these ideas has compelled some of the educated people to lose their faith in their indigenous tribal spirits. Again, some of them have gone so far as to give up their propitiation in any form and in any circumstance. The most outstanding examples of this change are set by two brothers, Karn Singh and Gulab Singh living separately in Kuakhhera village. They declare, "We have no faith in the spirits and *bhuts*, which other members of our community propitiate. We have not given any place to these spirits in our family gods. We do not want to worship mounds of earth. We have our faith and confidence in *Bhagwan* about whom we have learnt from *Ramayan* and *Gita*." Thus the conscious group among the Tharus is becoming more realistic and progressive about their religious beliefs, for they have now realized which of their rites are repugnant to their civilised neighbours. They have developed some sort of aversion to their time-old practices. In this way, the Tharu religion has changed from a mere crude form of 'animism' to Hinduism, although it is very difficult to draw a line between 'animism' and popular Hinduism. 'To the field anthropologist', remarks D. N. Majumdar, 'there does not exist any distinction between 'animism' and popular Hinduism'.¹ Elwin² also supports the same view. The distinction between tribal religions and Hinduism or the previous classification into 'animism' and Hinduism is mean-

1. D.N. Majumdar, 'Bongaism',—Essays in Anthropology presented to S.C. Roy, p. 63.

2. Verrier Elwin, 'Loss of Nerve',

ingless. 'The tribal people are always willing to worship a few more gods if by doing so they can gain some material or social advantage', on the other hand, the Hindu has no objection to include in his multi-god pantheon a few tribal gods.' In the light of this study, Tharu religion can be said to be dynamic in its character as well as in form, because it is definitely changing from mere 'animism' to 'Hinduism'.

X

RELIGIOUS FEASTS, FESTIVALS AND FAIRS

The Tharus, with their more settled economic life and ever-increasing number of adoptions of deities and saints from other religions, have also developed elaborate rites, rituals and ceremonies to be observed at periodical occasions. This chapter, therefore, describes common feasts, festivals and fairs which the Tharus as a community have to celebrate for ensuring their general well-being. The intervals between sowing and harvesting seasons involve unforeseen risks and dangers; and therefore, the entry into each agricultural pursuit is celebrated by certain public or private, individual or community religious worship to face these dangers at every new phase of the calendar.

TABLE XXVII
Table showing Inter-relation between Economic Activities, Religious Feasts and Festivals

Months	Economic Activities	Religious Festivals	Religious Feasts
1. <i>Chait</i> (March-April)	Harvesting of <i>rabi</i> crop.	<i>Bari Charai</i>	Worship of <i>Bhumsen</i> .
2. <i>Baisakh</i> (April-May)	Fishing and hunting.	<i>Chhoti Charai</i>	—
3. <i>Jeth</i> (May-June)	Supplementary occupations.	—	—
4. <i>Asadh</i> (June-July)	Sowing of <i>kharif</i> crop.	<i>Asadhi</i>	Private and public worship of all the deities.
5. <i>Sawan</i> (July-Aug.)	Fishing; Collecting of forest fruits.	<i>Tij</i>	Worship of the river Ganga.
6. <i>Bhadaun</i> (Aug.-Sept.)	Harvesting of maize.	<i>Janmastmi</i>	Worship of Lord Krishna.
7. <i>Kunwar</i> (Sept.-Oct.)	Harvesting of <i>kharif</i> crop.	<i>Anthai</i>	Offering of new rice to the family gods.
8. <i>Kartik</i> (Oct.-Nov.)	Sowing of <i>rabi</i> crop.	<i>Diwali</i>	The <i>Barshi</i> day-Ancestor worship.
9. <i>Aghahan</i> (Nov.-Dec.)	Sowing continued.	—	—
0. <i>Pus</i> (Dec.-Jan.)	More hunting	—	—
1. <i>Magh</i> (Jany.-Feb.)	Hunting slacks.	—	—
2. <i>Phagun</i> (Feb.-March)	Harvesting of <i>masur</i> .	<i>Holi</i>	Worship of <i>Bhumsen</i> .

The table on the previous page shows how economic and social activities are dovetailed into the religious practices. For instance, when the harvest of *rabi* crops is over in the month of *Chait*, the first ceremonial eating of wheat takes place during the *Bari Charai* festival. At this time the *Bharara* offers *hom* to the goddess, *Bhumsen*. Both collective and private or individualistic worship of family and village deities is held on the occasion of *Asadhi* before the next sowing season begins.

Religious Festivals

Holi¹

The celebration of *Holi* or spring festival commences from the *Puranmasi* (Full Moon of *February*). The Tharus have copied from their Hindu neighbours, the custom of burning a sapling or a branch of the *semar* or *simal* tree (*Bombax Malabaricum*) which they place on an open space near *Bhumsen* on the very day of the commencement of *Holi*. But they do not worship *Holika* like the Hindus and make their offerings to their goddess, *Bhumsen*. The day after the *Puranmasi* in *Magh*, the *Padhan* leads the villagers to the *Bhumsen* to place the *Holi* near the goddess. He takes jaggery, *ghee*, clove, in a brass plate along with a mug of water and fire; and other men and children follow him with five cow-dung cakes in their hands. Some also carry *dhhol* and *jhanjh* with them. When the *Padhan* reaches the *Bhumsen*, he takes off his shoes and places on the fire the offering he has brought for all the deities represented on the *Bhumsen*. The rest of the party place five cow-dung cakes. In the end jaggery is distributed among the people present there, who sing *Holi* songs, *simrauni chhand* specially suited for the occasion.

Simrauni Chhand

On the outskirts of the village the goddess *Bhawani* lives.
Tell me how the two bullocks and cart are made.

-
1. Refer to author's article 'Spring Festival Among the Tharu', *The Eastern Anthropologist*, 1948, Vol. II, No. 1. pp. 27-38.

The bullocks are of *Nagauri* breed and the cart is made of sandal wood.

Who will sit inside and who will drive ?

Kalaka will sit inside and *Langura*¹ will drive.

Who will sit inside and who will drive ?

Parwati will sit inside and *Langura* will drive.

Who will sit inside and who will drive ?

Hulaka will sit inside and *Langura* will drive.

Who will sit inside and who will drive ?

Sitala will sit inside and *Langura* will drive.

Who will sit inside and who will drive ?

Jwala will sit inside and *Langura* will drive.

Who will sit inside and who will drive ?

Purwa will sit inside and *Langura* will drive.

Who will sit inside and who will drive ?

Durga will sit inside and *Langura* will drive.

After the singing of prayer songs to the accompaniment of *dhol* and *jhanjh* for a couple of hours, the party returns to the *Padhan's* house where they are received with great welcome and cheer by the *Padhaniya*. Here again, they sing *Holi* songs but avoid abusive ones.

Song

My young *Kanha*, innocent and tiny husband : how can
I hold myself ?

He puts on a turban, trousers and ties a *patuka* round
his waist.

The wife is standing and imploring, 'where are you ready
to go' ?

"I do not like bare arms, my small fingers are swelling.
Get a *bracelet* for me to wear, I am after all your wife."
Do not tease me. Your *dewar* will get a *bracelet* for you.
On wearing *bracelet* Radha was happy and the husband
liked it.

She went and greeted her mother-in-law, and tears of
joy rolled down her cheeks.

Long live your wishes, even greater than this.

1. Monkey-god.

Here at the *Padhan's* house jaggery is distributed among the people of the party before they return to their houses. The Tharus believe from the first day of the month of *Phagun*, *Holi* festival begins and continues for about one and a half month. From this time on, they sing songs and dance night and day as they like. For the dancing, married men dress themselves in their wedding costumes, but their womenfolk do not. These men tie anklets round their ankles which they only use during *Holi* and not in marriage. Men and women dance separately in circles of their own. When they dance together in one circle, it is called *Khichari Holi*, but this is rather rare. In both these forms, the dancers form two groups, one group initiating the lines of the songs and another repeating the same to the accompaniment of *dhul*, *mirdang*, and *jhanjh*, though the women dance without them.

Holi Song

One cannot control one's heart whose husband has gone
to a far off land.

As in *Sawan surahi*¹ blossoms and the red rose in *Bhadaun*.
The wife has blossomed in mother's house, her *chalo*² is not
done.

The husband has planted a tree of clove.

Take care to water it lest it may wither away.

Chait and *Baisakh* both have passed, her *chalo* was not
done.

Send this message that her *chalo* is not done.

She will sit and chew the betels, since her husband has
gone away.

On the day when *Puranamasi* falls, women clean their houses and the menfolk led by the *Padhan* go to the *Bhumsen* where they have placed their *Holi* one month back. Every one carries cow-dung cakes and rice but the *Padhan*, in addition to these, takes *ghee*, clove, jaggery and *puries* in a brass plate

1. A kind of wild flower.

2. Second ceremonial visit to husband's place.

and a mug of clean water. The *Padhan* makes an offering of jaggery, *ghee* and clove to the goddesses at *Bhumsen*, makes fire and places it on some dry straw and makes seven rounds around *Holi* and then sets fire to it. Every one follows him and throws into it some cow-dung cakes they have brought. This ceremony is known as *Holi Bagharana*. Now, the *Padhan* distributes *puries* and jaggery among people who dance and sing round the fire and also throw some rice in it.

Calendar Song (*Barahmasa*)

Without husband no one can cure the pain.

Asadh came, it rained, and in *Sawan* it rained more heavily.

With *Bhadaun* comes the lightning and thunder; my body shivers.

In *Kunwar* lotus blossoms in the water; in *Kartik* the water is clean.

In *Aghahan* I am feeling cold and my body shivers.

In *Pus* the east wind blows and the heart gets frozen in *Magh*.

In *Phagun* with whom to play *Holi*, on whom to sprinkle my *abir*?¹

In *Chait* the *banarayya*² blossoms and in *Baisakh* it bears fruit.

In *Jeth* my husband promised to come, when will my husband come?

After a couple of hours of singing they return to the *Padhan's* house where they indulge in *Chhalari* in which they amuse themselves throwing at one another coloured water but more vulgar among them throw filth and mud. In this way, men, women and children of the village create a jovial atmosphere. They indulge themselves in amorous songs and even in obscene jokes. The following is a dialogue between husband and wife:—

Husband: Oh bride! where did you get such beautiful eyes?
Were your eyes moulded in a machine or were
they engraved by a jeweller?

1. Coloured powder.

2. A kind of wild flower.

- Wife: My eyes were neither moulded in a machine nor
were they engraved by a jeweller.
My father and mother gave me birth and God
has given me grace and beauty.
- Husband: Look bride! take care of your necklace.
Gently, gently, she cleans the courtyard, the
straps of her bodice are loosened.
She pulls the straps of her bodice and loosens them
and she looks charming.
- Wife: In such a chilly winter, my husband, I will not
let you go.
- Husband: Darling, if you will not let me go, I will pitch a
tent in the forest.
- Wife: If you pitch a tent, Oh husband! I will cut its
strings.
- Husband: If you cut the strings, I will build a palace in the
forest.
- Wife: If you build a palace I will destroy every brick
of it.

After that, they return to their homes, take a bath and enjoy their meal specially prepared for the occasion. They start new fire in their hearths from this day.

Next morning they fetch ashes from *Holi* and then the *Padhan* daubs ashes on the forehead of men, who put on new clothes, if they can so afford. The *Padhaniya* applies *tika* on the forehead of women. Then they visit each other's house and embrace each other greeting one another with *Ram Ram*. In the evening they again sing and dance.

Holi Song

Is there any rose as red as colourful Radhi?

On her ankles tinklings of *painjani*¹ *anwat*² and *bichhiya*³,
and *nwar* are heard.

She walks like a peacock.

Thinner than the betel leaves, more yellow than *turmeric*
with thin face and red cheeks.

She walks like a peacock.

-
1. Ornaments worn by women on thier ankles and toes.
 2. A tickling silver ornament worn on the ankles.
 3. Ornaments for the fingers of feet.

After *Milan* ceremony they play *Holi* for eight days more but not with the same zest as they did before. This is known as dead *Holi*. On the eighth day the *K'hakarera* ceremony takes place. A man from every house takes seven balls of mud with seven thin wickers stuck in the balls, cloves, five kinds of grain (*pachranga*), leaves of barley and flowers of *tesu* in a broken pitcher and goes to the southern direction from the village in the company of the *Padhan*. The *Padhan* also carries with him cloves, *ghee*, jaggery and fire in a broken pitcher. He makes *hom* on the fire in the name of the goddess *Bhawani* and breaks the pitcher with his *hammer*. Others clapping their hands run towards the river to take a bath in it. At the end they all return to the *Padhan's* house and play *Chhalari*, sing songs and eat jaggery offered by the *Padhan*.

Song

In the moonlit night *Lal** is going with a loaded boat.
Why don't you get up and see, Oh *nanadi*¹ who is going
with such a freight?

My *brother* and your husband are going with such a freight.
*Sanwar**, what freight are you carrying Oh *Lal*! the drops
of water are flowing?

He is loading cloves and nuts which are scattering their
fragrance every where.

Now the boat has left and reached Ganga *Ghat*.

At the confluence of Ganga with Jamuna, *Lal* will halt
with his boat.

It took all night to fix the pegs for the tent and the bullocks
were tied up to midnight.

Lal, tired as he was, went to sleep on the boat, the
bullocks bellowed on seeing the thieves.

The bullocks with their mouths muzzled were let loose to
graze the grass.

You cannot touch my string, I will give you a push, you thief.

*Terms of endearment.

1. Husband's sister.

Then the Tharus come back to their respective houses, take meals and begin to sing and dance again at the *Padhan's* residence.

Song

Oh *Lal* ! try a bottle full of wine, my husband is a great drunkard.

My husband has taken away my *saluwa*,*

And has given to *kalabariya*¹ who may return it or not.

My husband has taken away my *ghunghata*,*

And has given to *kalabariya* who may return it or not.

My husband has taken away my *Bandi*,*

And has given to *kalabariya* who may return it or not.

My husband has taken away my *hansuli*,*

And has given to *kalabariya* who may return it or not.

My husband has taken away my *harawa*,*

And has given to *kalabariya* who may return it or not.

After *Holi* festival has been observed with these rituals, offerings, prayers, libations, music and dance to the village goddess *Bhumsen* follows the festival of *Bari Charai*.

Bari Charai

After the *Khakarera* ceremony, the *Holi* festival of the Tharus does not come to an end, unless the *Bari Charai* ceremony has been observed in the month of April. During the *Holi* festival the women generally go to their parent's to celebrate the festival and come back after the *Bari Charai* ceremony has been performed. The *Bharara* fixes the day of the *Bari Charai* either an Monday or Thursday in the first or second week of April.

A day before the actual *Bari Charai* day, men, women and children go to some river for fishing. In the morning of the *Charai* day, the *Bharara* makes an offering of jaggery, cloves and

1. Liquor seller.

*Clothes and ornaments worn by Tharu women.

ghee to all the goddesses at *Bhumsen*. The women prepare special dishes of fish, *puri*, sweet rice, *lapasi*, *papara* and go to some orchard with *Padhaniya* as their leader. The *Padhan* and the *Bharara* also arrive there. The *Bharara* offers some prayers and *hom* in the name of the goddess, *Bhawani*. The women treat the *Bharara* with the eatables they have brought with them. The *Bharara* in return recites some *mantras* for their health and happiness. The *Padhaniya* shares the eatable which she brings with all present in the garden. This is repeated by every woman of the party. Then they picnic under the shade of a mango tree. The *Bharara*, *Padhan* and other men who happen to be there run away to avoid the vulgar jokes of women. They play *Chhaleri* and throw water on men who happen to pass that way. They sit in the orchard till sunset and sing songs full of jokes, crude and vulgar to the accompaniment of their favourite instrument *dhol*.

Holi Song

My husband does not write a letter, I am pining without
*Syam*¹.

I do not like my mother's place, the memory of husband's
house hovers in my mind.

The cruel husband feels no compassion, my breasts are surging
up.

How can I preserve this treasure ? How I pine for *Syam* ?

After this *Charai* festival which forms an integral part of the *Holi* festival and may be considered as the *Holi* specially for women, the festival finally comes to an end and women return to their husband's home.

Chhoti Charai

This festival is not celebrated with any religious worship of the gods and goddesses as it is done during the *Holi* and *Bari Charai*. A fortnight after the *Bari Charai* festival, women simply prepare *puries*, fish and a few sweet dishes and take

1. *Syam* stands for husband.

them to an orchard and eat together the food they bring. They sing songs for a couple of hours and then return home. The songs they sing have such themes as pangs of separation and the like.

Song (i)

In my courtyard, a beautiful tree has a cooling shade.

Slowly its fruits are getting full of sap but I do not get my sleep well.

If I plant a *neem* tree in my courtyard, I could play with its flowers.

Do not speak harsh words, you may not get such a love from others.

Song (ii)

My parent's house is full of pleasures, I will not go to husband's house.

In husband's house the cots are broken but in parent's house there are beautiful beds.

In husband's house there are only dry breads to eat, but in parent's house I get good food.

In husband's house there are small children but in parent's house there are young and handsome men.

Asadhi

Whereas during *Holi* and *Bari Charai* festivals, the Tharus worship gods, goddesses and other spirits at the *Bhumsen* of the village, *Asadhi* is an occasion when both public and private worship is performed. For public worship a *Bharara* is called upon to make an offering consisting of *ghee* and jaggery on the fire, to all the deities of the *Bhumsen* in the month of July on a fixed day. He makes sacrifices of goats or fowls, if necessary, to safeguard the village from diseases and other calamities. For this kind of collective worship, every family contributes some *ghee* and jaggery. For private worship the head of each family keeps a fast till he has made a required offering to his family gods. He has to employ different methods of worshipping different gods and goddesses. For instance,

if he has included the goddess *Durga* in his family pantheon, he will offer a *hom* and fix a red flag near her place in the open courtyard of his house. The ancestor-spirits and other goddesses are given *bhent*, but the spirits of the cattle-shed are offered some sweet preparations and *puries*.

Tij (Hindu Festival)

The Hindu influence has taught the Tharus the worship of the holy river Ganga, which they perform on the third day (*Tij*) in the month of *Sawan* (July-August). The women cook *puries* and *pharas* and visit some river or pond in place of the holy Ganga. The *Padhaniya* offers *bhent* at the river or pond. The women assembled there follow her in offering their *bhents* and picnic on the bank of the river. They return home singing songs, such as these :—

Song (i)

My heart throbs and wishes to fly.

Firstly I want to go to *Pragraj*¹ where I will get my head shaven.

I will offer sandal wood and leaves of *bel* tree to Siwa.

I will go to *Jagannathpuri*² where I will give a big religious feast and earn a name.

I will circumambulate with Raja Ram.

Song (ii)

Now I have not been able to trace *Kanhaiya*.

I dreamt that a son of *Ahir* of dark complexion was playing on his flute.

The music of the flute hit me like an arrow.

But the wound could not be traced.

Pragraj—another name for Allahabad which is a famous holy place of the Hindus because of the confluence of the river Ganga with Jamuna.

2. Another holy place in Orrisa.

Janmastami (Hindu Festival)

The Tharus by themselves rarely celebrate the festival of *Janmastami*, the birth day of Lord Krishna, but they join the Hindus in their celebration. Instead of worshipping Lord Krishna at their family or village pantheon, they visit nearby towns and take part in this festival.

Aunth

After the harvest of paddy, the Tharus observe *Aunth* festival in the month of *Kunwar* (September-October). The women prepare *puries* and *pharas* of new rice and offer at the altars of the ancestor-spirits and other family gods to invoke their blessings. No special religious rites are associated with this festival.

Diwali

The Tharus do not celebrate the *Diwali* as the Hindus do. With the former, it is a day when they observe the *Barshi* ceremony of the deceased spirit as described before.

We have seen that the deities at the *Bhumsen* and the Ancestor-spirit, the spirits of the cattle-shed and other family gods are worshipped during *Holi*, *Bari Charai* and *Asadhi* festivals to protect both the village and the family from many unforeseen dangers and to bring good luck to the Tharus. During most of these festivals, they have a kind of community or collective worship, though private worship of their deities is as popular as the public one specially when they are faced with any sickness, obstructions in child birth and the construction and occupation of a new house. In all these cases the help of a *Bharara* is sought to worship the gods and goddesses to bring about the desired effect.

Private Worship of Gods and Goddesses at the Time of Laying the Foundation of a New House and its Occupation.

When a Tharu desires to build a new house either in his old or in a newly started village, the *Bharara* is called upon to

worship the goddess *Bhawani* before the site is selected. It is worth mentioning here that the occupation of a new house presupposes the installation of the family pantheon and its propitiation with appropriate offerings. Thursdays are regarded as auspicious days for this purpose. Before the family enters into the new house, the head of the family installs the ancestor-spirits, and other deities in the house and outside it in the open courtyard, by taking a mound of earth and placing in the place reserved for it. Then he makes an offering of *hom* to these deities. The mistress of the house also offers food to them when she cooks the first meal in her new home. The family partakes of the food after the offering has been made to these deities. Some friends and relatives are also invited to a big meal, if the family can afford.

Private Worship During Sickness and Other Crises

Private worship also takes place during sickness when the Tharus worship either such gods and goddesses as *Bhawani* and her six sisters, *Punyagiri* or propitiate the spirits *Pachhawwan* and *Kharga* which suppress the evil effects of the malevolent spirits and *bhuts*.

The Worship of Thakur

Like most of the Hindu castes, some of the Tharus have also begun to worship the Supreme Deity, *Thakur*. Only those who celebrate *yajna* or *katha* have included in their pantheon the most powerful of gods, *Thakur*. For His worship, the Tharus have to depend upon the *Pahari* or *Desi* Brahmins to perform *yajna* for them. The Brahmins are given at least five seers of grain over and above the cash payment of one rupee and annas four. It is an expensive affair to arrange it and to buy a number of articles for *yajna*. Only a few well-to-do families therefore have been able to afford to bear the cost of such a celebration which also includes a sumptuous feast for the relatives. After the Brahmin has narrated the story of *Satya Narayan* to the relatives and friends of a family and has performed *yajna*, he installs the supreme god, *Thakur*, ad-

jacent to the family gods and goddesses by placing a mound of earth near them, though the mound of *Thakur* is raised much higher than that of other deities just to denote His higher position.

Before closing this chapter, a calendar study of religious fairs, which are held from time to time in this region, is given in Table XXVIII to show that the religious fairs are also adjusted so that these do not interrupt the agricultural activities or upset in any way the economic life of the Tharus.

TABLE XXVIII

The Calendar Study of the Religious Fairs

Sl. No.	Months	Names of the religious fairs held at different places.
1.	<i>Chait</i> (March-April)	<i>Punyagiri Devi</i> on the Himalayas.
2.	<i>Baisakh</i> (April-May)	<i>Siwteras</i> at Beghaura village.
3.	<i>Jeth</i> (May-June)	<i>Bale Miyan</i> at Bhisti village. <i>Dasehara</i> Siwa temple at Uldan village.
4.	<i>Asadh</i> (June-July)	...
5.	<i>Sawzn</i> (July-Aug.)	...
6.	<i>Bhadaun</i> (Aug.-Sept.)	<i>Krishnu Janamastmi</i> at Kichha.
7.	<i>Kunwar</i> (Sept.-Oct.)	<i>Ram Lila</i> at Sitarganj.
8.	<i>Kartik</i> (Oct.-Nov.)	<i>Diwali</i> at Nanakmata (Sitarganj) and <i>Ganga Asnan</i> at the Sarda river (Khatima tahsil).
9.	<i>Agahan</i> (Nov.-Dec.)	...
10.	<i>Pus</i> (Dec.-Jan.)	...
11.	<i>Magh</i> (Jan.-Feb.)	<i>Sitla</i> fair in Sisai.
12.	<i>Phagun</i> (Feb.-March)	<i>Jhar</i> fair at <i>Siwa</i> temple near Sitarganj in Chakarpura (Khatima).

The above table makes clear to us two points, namely :

Majority of these fairs are held in the honour of Hindu gods and goddesses. For instance, the fairs at Baghaura, Uldan, Chakarpura village are held in honour of Lord Shiwa and those at Nanakmata and Sitarganj and Kichha are held in honour of Guru Nanak, Ram Chandra and Lord Krishna respectively. *Punyagiri* fair is held on the Himalayas in honour of the same goddess after whom the fair is known. There are only two fairs which are held in honour of Muslim saints, *Bale Miyan* and *Mithan Shah* at Bhisti and Sisai respectively.

Some of these fairs are closely connected with the Hindu festivals, such as, *Ram Lila*, *Siwateras*, *Siwaratri* and *Gangasnan*.

Thus the Hindu culture is slowly influencing the religious domain of the Tharus who flock to these fairs in thousands to worship the Hindu gods, such as, Lord Siwa and mythical hero Ram Chandra. The fairs in honour of Guru Nanak of the Sikhs, and Bale Miyan and Mithan Shah of the Muslims also attract a very large number of the Tharus who offer sweets to them to invoke their blessings. Hundreds of men and women visit the shrines of Guru Nanak and Bale Miyan with *sinni* (sweets) to grant their children long life and protect them from infantile mortality. When Siwa Ram of Nagara village promised to offer *sinni* annually at the shrine of Guru Nanak during one of the Diwali fairs; he found that his children began to survive thereafter.

These fairs also attract a large number of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs not merely as visitors but also as stall-keepers. So most of these fairs serve as market places where the Tharus exchange their goods with foreign merchandise either on barter or on cash system. These fairs bring an opportunity for the Tharus to come in contact with a number of people of different communities and to learn from them their methods of buying and selling. In this way, the Tharus are gradually throwing off their isolation though at the cost of exploitation of their ignorance and backwardness of their business methods.

A systematic study of the religious festivals, feasts and fairs, therefore, reveals that the fundamental idea underlying all the religious rites, rituals and ceremonies is to ensure the well-being of an individual family, its cattle and the crop, the village and finally of the whole community and to protect them from unforeseen or imminent dangers and hardships. Therefore, forms of worship, as we have seen, are both collective and individualistic, public and private. The worship of the family gods, goddesses and spirits, *Thakur*, and spirits of the cattle-shed is done on individual basis. The collective form of worship of *Bhumsen* has contributed largely towards developing community feeling and social solidarity among the Tharus. Though there is an absence of the idea of a definite pantheon of the Tharus as such, it is clear that there is a tendency growing among them to absorb the deities of Hindu religion on a large scale and to respect the saints and *pirs* of other religions. The only exception can be said to be the educated and progressive Tharus who have given up their faith in these gods due to Arya Samajist influence. However, in time to come this process of assimilation of foreign religious cults is to some extent weakening their faith in their old tribal religion, spiritism or 'animism'.

XI

MAGIC, SORCERY AND DIVINATION

The 'Tharus' conception of super-human powers and their ever-increasing deities in the village and family pantheons is changing their religion from mere 'animism' to Hinduism, including in it a great reverence for the Muslim saints and Sikh *gurus*. Magic as much as, if not more than the religion proper, dominates customs and pervades the whole social life of the Tharus. Religion, as Dr. Marett defines, includes all salutary ways of dealing with super-normal powers, and magic includes all bad ways of dealing with them. But then, magic has been divided into two classes popularly known as Black and White Magic. The object of Black Magic is anti-social and its methods of dealing with the super-natural powers are evil and wicked. Formerly, the Tharus were highly notorious for their Black Magic and witchcraft as emphasized by earlier writers like Crooke,² Knowles³ and Majumdar.⁴ There was a story prevalent among all the sections of people of the plains that the *Tharuhāt*, the habitat of Tharus, was synonymous with sorcery, witchcraft and Black Magic. This was one of the main reasons to deter the people of the plains to come into close contact with the Tharus for many decades. Tharu women were believed to possess *tona*, the power of the 'evil eye,' in order to bewitch and cast a charm

1. R. R. Marett, 'Anthropology', The Home University Library, Series 41, 1936, pp. 209-210.
2. Loc Cit. p. 405.
3. Loc Cit. p. 214.
4. Loc Cit. p. 108.

on the people. These sorcerers were also said to transform men into animals and keep them under their control. The magicians or the sorcerers were said to accomplish their nefarious purposes with the aid of some mischievous spirit whom they used to adopt as their associate and to keep it in good humour by sacrifices at stated periods. But now the powers of their magic and sorcery seem to have considerably declined with the result that the practice of Black Magic has practically disappeared and White Magic alone holds the sway. The *Bhararas*, as described before, possess knowledge of magic and are called upon to practise their art for achieving the protective, curative and other beneficial ends. Magic to Tharus as such, is not simply a belief or something that makes one feel uncanny but it is an art in which theory and dogma at every step are translated into action. Hence, it is more of a practical affair with them. It is connected with every event or crisis of their life, for instance, with marriage, pregnancy and child birth, sickness and death; with agricultural operations, protection of crops from the wild animals and pests and construction of houses etc. The Tharus, therefore, have an implicit faith in the magical power of the *Bhararas*.

Magic, as pointed out by Malinowski,¹ consists of spells and rites performed by a man who is entitled by the fulfilment of several conditions. He observes that every act of magic is by things said, things done and the personality of the magician. We, therefore, find that the spells, the rite and personality of the magician, all three are the basic elements of magic. Since a great efficacy is supposed to reside in the *mantras*, magical formulae uttered by the *Bhararas*, the popular belief among the Tharus is that a string of words arranged in a specific manner possesses the charm and power, characteristic of magical practice. The Tharus, therefore, do not make a fine distinction between the *mantra* and the magic. Raymond Firth has also reached the same conclusion about the Maoris of New Zealand. "In fact the term,

1. B. Malinowski, 'The Sexual Life of the Savages in N. W. Melanesia', p. 337.

Karakia, meaning strictly, the formula which is uttered, is also used as a generic term for magic. In this set chain of words, behind which ultimately stood the power of the *Atma*, the super-natural beings, lay the great mystic value of the magical act"¹.

The Art of Bharara

A few decades ago the Tharu *Bhararas* earned a high reputation for their magic, and their incantations were believed to work wonders. However, the modern *Bhararas* have forgotten the magical powers of their old famous compcers who could kill people and also bring them back to life, could call the spirits at their will or exorcise them and do many other wonderful things which appear incredible to the Tharus today. Such reputed *Bhararas* were Bhajji of Harriya village, Hori of Jamaur Patiya, the father of Chandan, Bhonp of Tingri and Amakya of Mahuwat. Of all these *Bhararas*, the story of Amakya is most fascinating. The story goes that it was he alone who could face a *Bhanga Bhut*. A *Bharara*, named Bhanga, who had Sariyasara village under his supervision was killed by a tiger. He was turned into an evil spirit who began to torture the inhabitants of Sariyasara and even killed some of them. When the people of the village could not endure the suffering any longer, they approached a number of *Bhararas* who failed to exorcise the *Bhanga Bhut*, and finally they requested a renowned *Bharara*, Amakya, to save them from the tortures of the evil spirit. Amakya came to their village and controlled *Bhanga Bhut* by his magical powers and tied him to a *dhak* tree near the Deoha river, till he apologised to Amakya and requested him to have mercy on him. Then only he was set free on the promise that he would not move away beyond the tree to trouble or to torture the people of any other village. From that time *Bhanga Bhut* has his haunt on the *dhak* tree and is very friendly and helpful to the people,

1. Reymond Firth, 'Primitive Economics of New Zealand Maoris' p. 259.

whenever they are in trouble, if he is offered *bhang* and a smoke to which he was addicted during his life time. For instance, when Chhote Lal of Sariyasara lost a pair of bullocks he prayed *Bhanga Bhut* to help him to find the bullocks with the promise of *bhang* and smoke. He did find them and, of course, Chhote Lal kept his promise.

Every Tharu feels that though the magical powers of the *Bhararas* have deteriorated with the time, even today their importance is more or less intact. The magic still stimulates growth of crops, protects them from wild animals, saves men from snake and scorpion bite, prevents and cures diseases, restores fertility to barren women and foils the mischievous designs of the evil spirits.

The vocation of a *Bharara* is tabooed for women in the Tharu community. It is contrary to the former belief that the women possess powers of witchcraft and sorcery.

The Tharus believe that the *mantras* enchanted by the *Bhararas* during many rites and rituals for bringing about definite results have a super-natural sanction behind them and this is responsible for their mystic potency. But the repetition of a *mantra* is the main thing which imparts efficacy to magic, though the mode of delivery, communion with the spirits and the physical and mental conditions of the *Bhararas* are also necessary factors to bring about the desired effect. For instance, the *Bhararas* must observe fast when they are employed in performing the important rituals, such as, in controlling epidemics of cholera and small-pox and in making periodical offerings and sacrifices to the village deities, gods and goddesses. They must avoid sex relationship while fasting and must take a bath before performing the magical rites. These taboos must be observed in order to give the potency and effectiveness to the spells. This is the reason why they observe the traditionally prescribed taboos when they have to handle major and important magical rites and performances. Malinowski is also of the same opinion that human body, being the receptacle of magic and the channel of its flow must be submitted to various conditions. Then the magician has to keep all sorts of taboos, or else the spell

might be injured.¹ Moreover, *mantras* have to be recited in one breath without any break. The examination of the *mantras* shows that the words used in them are correlated to the rituals performed by the *Bhararas*.

It is very difficult to quote the actual words of all the *mantras* recited on different occasions to please the gods and goddesses, to dispel the lesser spirits or to control other unforeseen dangers, because the *Bhararas* believe that if their *mantras* or any of their magical devices whatsoever are put in black and white they will lose all their efficacy and power. After great difficulty and persuasion, I recorded a few of these *mantras*, magical devices and the ways of rendering them by the *Bhararas* on special occasions.

Some magical rites and devices connected with agricultural operations, protection of crops from wild animals, cure of barrenness or sterility and obstructed delivery have already been described. Here are given some other magical devices and rituals of the *Bhararas*.

A Magical Device for Driving away the Dacoits

In recent years a number of dacoities had been committed in Tharu settlements. The dacoits well armed with lethal weapons and guns attacked the Tharu villages. They wanted to rob the guns possessed by some of the Tharus and to loot some well-to-do *Padhans* and *Mustajars*. It is said that the Tharus could seldom face these dacoits by themselves without the help of the *Bharara*, though now in one or two cases they have tried to fight them. When the dacoits attack any village or when the people apprehend that their village is likely to be attacked, they approach an expert *Bharara* to take some precaution against such a forthcoming danger. The *Bharara* visits the village and performs the ritual in the following manner. Bhaggamal *Bharara* of Naugamanath Bisaunta says, 'I take a mug of clean water and propitiate the *Paigambar*² who can

1. B. Malinowski, 'Magic, Science and Religion' Science, Religion and Reality, edited by Joseph Needham.

2. A Muslim messenger of God.

protect the village from the attacks of the dacoits. I recite this *mantra* to invoke his blessing'.

Mantra

Nine lakhs of the messengers of God have come.

The house is made of copper with doors of unbreakable stones.

I will present one and quarter a seer of sweets to you.

If people come to attack these villages from a thousand direction.

Help, *Mohammad Rasul*¹, help !

The effect of this *mantra* is that the *Paigambar* makes the dacoits blind. They find that they are obstructed in their plans and leave the place at once. Bhaggamal said, "I have tried this *mantra* in Alabirdi village successfully. Once when the village was attacked by the dacoits the inhabitants approached me calling out that Lala Ram's gun and other valuables had been carried away by the dacoits who had challenged the inhabitants for a second attack. A year after the dacoits returned and attacked the village once again. Because of the effect of my magical spell they became almost blind and could not loot anything."

Magical Devices to Remove Epidemics

A reference may be made how the *Bhararas* check and control the epidemics among the people and the cattle of a village, a detailed description will follow in the next chapter. The *Bhararas* find out which goddesses or spirits are responsible for the epidemics, and what sacrifices are required to appease them. After the trouble is stopped a subscription is raised from the people to make the appropriate sacrifices to express their gratitude to the goddesses.

The Control of Domestic Animals

The *Bhararas* not only claim to have the power to control wild animals but they can also trace the direction in which

1. Prophet Mohammad.

the domestic cattle stray away. It was this magical power that helped Khayali Ram of Audali to find his pair of bullocks after a fortnight.

The Making of Rains

Because the Tharus depend upon agriculture as the main source of their livelihood, any delay in the rains upsets their whole calendar of economic activities. Therefore, they have devised a popular method of their own for making rains. Bairagi Singh of Nakuliya village informed us, "When rains are delayed, young boys of the village gather together early in the morning, fill a number of pitchers with water and dilute cow-dung with it. They throw these pitchers over the houses of the inhabitants in such a way as not to hurt any of the occupants. They repeat it for days together till it starts raining". At the same time, the *Bhararas* also engage themselves in worshipping the goddess, *Bhumsen*, to give them rains. However, the *Bhararas* have no magical powers to stop floods, hail or storm.

The Evil Eye and Methods of Warding off its Effects

The belief in the influence of the 'evil eye' is common among all the folks in general but particularly among the primitive tribes in India. The Tharus, a superstitious people as they are, believe that the glance or (*najar*) of certain people distil a sort of poison which injuriously affects the healthy growth and prosperity of persons, cattle and crops. It is believed that the 'evil eye', *najar*, is born with its possessor. The effect of the 'evil eye' of such a person is said to be still more harmful if it is accompanied by some words of malice.

There are a number of evil effects that the Tharus apprehend from the 'evil eye'. "When it is cast upon a healthy child," said a Tharu woman, "the child immediately falls ill, constantly cries and often has loose stools. If it is directed to a person while he is eating his food, he immediately begins to vomit, loses appetite and develops

a distaste towards the particular food which he has been very fond of. The 'evil eye' for a pregnant woman causes her difficult labour pains. Sometimes beautiful clothes and ornaments are favourite targets for the 'evil eye'. The wearer in this case falls sick. The 'evil eye' not only has its effects on human beings but also on domestic animals, particularly on milch cattle. If it is cast upon a cow or a she-buffalo, the yield of milk is lessened and sometimes is altogether stopped. If the 'evil eye' is directed towards standing crop, it will wither away."

In order to ward off the effect of 'evil eye' some of the following devices are used by the *Bhararas* :

(i) To avert the effect of the 'evil eye' from a child, a black mark with soot or some similar substance is applied on its forehead before it is taken out of the house. Amulets, specially made by the *Bhararas* are also put on round the neck of the child. In case the child has come under the spell of the 'evil eye' and has fallen sick, the *Bharara* is called upon to treat it. He recites his *mantras* and after finishing the recitation he blows his breath on the forehead of the child.

(ii) To prevent any harm to the cattle, cows and she-buffaloes are milked in a closed corner so that the persons with 'evil eye' may not see them. Furthermore, the Tharus generally do not let any milk go out from their house on Sunday for fear that this milk might not be used for some magical rituals. They also apply some black soot on the horns of these animals for protection against the 'evil eye' of the persons.

(iii) To divert the 'evil eye' from the crop, the cultivator places a bamboo pole with an earthen vessel painted over with black soot upside down right in the centre of the standing crop.

The Magic of Love

Formerly, the *Bhararas* used to practise the magic of love frequently but now-a-days it is losing its place for two

reasons. Firstly, there are a mere handful of *Bhararas* who have perfected their art and can execute it; and secondly, such a practice no longer has a sanction of the community, though a few *Bhararas* perform the love magic very secretly. If it leaks out, they will lose their respect. That is why a *Bharara* is not easily persuaded to perform love-magic, even though he may know the whole procedure of it. When a Tharu wishes to win the love of the opposite sex, he secretly secures the services of an expert *Bharara* for it and acquaints him with the name of the girl and all other particulars about her. The *Bharara* uses any of the two devices in entrapping the girl for her lover :—

(i) The *Bharara* casts his spell with *mohini mantra* on sweets or other edibles to be given to the girl concerned. Then the effect on the girl after eating the enchanted sweets unawares is that she feels restless till she sees the man in whose name the spell has been performed on her. In the meantime the lover visits her place as soon as he is informed about the successful effect of the *mantra*. This *mohini mantra* has been used by Bhaggamal *Bharara* of Naugamanath Bisaunta.

Mohini Mantra

*Masan*¹ and *Chandi*² are happily playing with mud and water.

Hira *Masan* has shot an arrow of love.

Oh *Kaluwa* upon my words.

Oh black *Kaluwa*, I will pour liquor over you.

I am sending it to you at mid-night.

You go and sit upon the woman's bed.

The woman should forget her own door; her parents are very sad to lose her.

As the ant runs towards the jaggery in the same way the woman should rush to me.

1. The spirits of the burial ground.

2. The goddess of death.

She must hate to see others, she must melt only at my sight.

She must show her back towards others, but she must turn her face towards me.

If I succeed in winning her, I will please you by an offering.

After the *Bharara* succeeds in winning the love of the girl for the lover, he makes a sacrifice of a fowl and offers a bottle of liquor supplied by the lover to the spirit.

(ii) Another device which a *Bharara* uses to win the girl for a lover is to recite a powerful *mantra* known as *murga mohini* in her presence gazing directly into her eyes. In this case the lover must accompany the *Bharara*. The effect of the *mantra* is believed to be immediate and her heart begins to palpitate. She feels a heartache, as it were, and a longing for love, which is satisfied only by the sight of the lover who happens to be there.

This *mantra* is being practised by Chandan *Bharara* of Jamaur Patiya, who narrated his 'modus operandi' to me.

Murga Mohini

The god of death, *Bhairaw*, with his black and white hair has been playing at the *Marghat* for a couple of hours. He is eating fish and meat.

The subjects are touching the feet of the King. When he has returned from *Lanka* he has appeared before the people,

Hanuman lives under his control, in his forehead lives the *mohini* of Raja Ram which entraps the girls.

Even the cheats and deceivers are caught in the trap.

The travellers on their way, the women at the well and on their way should be under my spell.

Oh bring her ! Bring her ! do this work for me.

Awaken the sleeping woman, bring the woman, she may be sitting or walking.

Now when she looks at her husband, she hates him ; but when she looks at me she greets me.

She turns her back on others, turns her face only towards me.

For my own prestige, and for the prestige of my *Guru*, *Isvar*, *Gaura*, *Parwati*, you come.

If you do not respond at once, I will call *Nona Chammari* for help.

After reciting the *mantra*, the *Bharara* offers a sacrifice of a hen to his favourite deity.

The Risks of Magic

Many risks are involved in the magical rites and rituals. The least mistake in the rituals, the failure to fulfil the promise made to the spirits, gods and goddesses to offer sacrifices or other gifts to them may lead to dangerous consequences. Sometimes, the evil spirits even beat the *Bhararas* who may be weak or naive in their magical art. Siwa Singh, a *Bharara* of Bawanpuri told us about his experience how once he received some blows from a man possessed by the *bhuts*. A Tharu woman of Kotra village promised the spirit, *Pachhauwan*, to sacrifice a goat to him, if he would help her to learn to sing. After getting her wish realized she forgot to keep her vow to the spirit. The result was that the spirit was so annoyed that it caused mental derangement to her.

On an analysis of the magical rites, rituals and the agencies through which they are effected we find that the deities and spirits named in the incantations, with a few exceptions, are mostly Hindu deities and sometimes Muslim *pirs* and saints. Not only that, even the *mantras*, the magical formulae and the incantations are mostly worded in the local Hindu dialect of their neighbours. Here is another clear instance to show that their original magical rites and rituals are tainted with alien traits practically those of the Hindus. The elaborate and long-winded incantations and invocations in the local Hindi dialect to the Hindu deities and the local spirits and godlings would lead one to believe that these ideas have been borrowed only from the high caste Hindus. But it is not so in all cases, because frequent references to *Nona Chammari*, a

renowned sorcerer of the Chamar community, are suggestive of the influence of the lower caste people as well. Therefore, the enlightened group among the Tharus is slowly losing its confidence in the efficacy of the *Bharara's* magic, though many still adhere to their age-long beliefs in the power of the magicians and the *Bhararas*, for their own material gain and welfare.

XII

DISEASES AND THEIR TREATMENT

The Tharus are a hardy people. Their health and physique are definitely superior to the rest of the inhabitants of the Tarai, namely the Hindus and the Muslims. Comparatively speaking, the Tharus have acclimatised themselves wonderfully well to the inhospitable climate of the Tarai and have developed a certain degree of immunity from the deadly scourge of malarial fever, a fact which has been supported by a number of writers, such as, H.R. Nevill, J.G. Mukerji¹, D.N. Majumdar and R.R. Gates. Nevill explains,

“From habitation and from a long course of natural selection, the Tharu has become almost immune from deadly malarial fever of the Tarai; it is not true, as is usually asserted, that the Tharu never suffers from fever ; but it is an undoubted fact that he is able to live and flourish in a climate which is generally fatal to immigrants from other districts.”²

Majumdar³ gives another reason for the Tharu's immunity from this disease. The liberal use of onions, garlic and turmeric in their daily diet, knowledge of certain herbs and roots, the practice of certain dietetic rules and their sacrifices coupled with the *Bharara's* devices may have helped them to fight against malaria very successfully and some of

1. A report on this subject was submitted by Scott and Mukerji in 1910. The immunity of the Tharus from malaria has been more or less recognised by the Public Health Department of Uttar Pradesh.

2. Loc. cit. p. 404.

3. D.N. Majumdar, 'Some Aspects of the Economic life of the Bhoksas and Tharus of Naini Tal Tarai'—*Journal of Anthropological Society of Bombay*, 1937, Jubilee Volume, pp. 116-117.

these factors may have been responsible for some kind of immunity from this fever. But he does not accept the view that they are totally immune from it, because the Tharu children suffer from this disease as other children do.

Writing about the immunity of the Tharus from malarial fever R.R. Gates says,

“The Tharus are a tribe in North India, between Nepal and the United Provinces. Majumdar (1942) finds (vide Table II) that they are very high in B, which may have been derived from mixture with Mongoloids. They are notoriously immune to malaria, and 78% of those with B and AB blood group said they were free from malaria, while those with “fever” were mostly A. It seems that Tharu children get the disease and develop an enlarged spleen but by the age of twelve or fifteen they have developed immunity. From this it appears that the presence of B may offer a selective advantage in malarial districts. This factor might account for the high B in some tribes occupying malarial regions, but there are many cases (e.g., Tierradel Fuego and East Greenland) which could not be accounted for in this way.”¹

A bio-chemical explanation for this immunity has also been suggested by Majumdar, which has been tentatively accepted by R.R. Gates in his above remarks. The Tharu blood groups in table II shows a preponderance of B and AB, which may be due to the lethal effect of climate which eliminates other groups not resistant to the prevailing scourge of malaria. The high incidence of B among the Tharus equally situated in malarious and inhospitable climate may be due to selection. R.R. Gates² accepts it as a possibility which according to him may even explain the high incidence of B in India. Therefore it may be inferred that this immunity from malaria may have been secured by the Tharus by taking certain precautions, such as, that of building their houses in open spaces with proper

1. R.R. Gates, Human Genetics, 1946, Vol. I p. 722

2. R.R. Gates, Human Ancestry From a Genetical Point of View, 1948. p. 457.

drainage and including in their diet meat, dried fish and liquor with plenty of spices, turmeric, onion and garlic. Dried fish, in particular, is regarded by the Tharus to be as effective as quinine. Added to this, their regular habit of hard work and their strong belief in the watchfulness of their numerous gods, godlings and spirits, give them sufficient will power to fight against various diseases prevalent in their region, endemic or otherwise ; yet enlarged spleen is very common among the Tharu children due to malarial infection, but as a rule, they outgrow it. Veneral diseases as well as leprosy are not very common. Skin diseases, such as, scabies and ring-worm, and ophthalmic diseases, such as, conjunctivities, trachoma and fauchoma are prevalent among the adults. Among epidemics which sweep through the villages and take a heavy toll of human lives, are cholera and small-pox. The devastating effect of these epidemics within recent years has resulted in a decrease in population and has also been responsible for the recurring migration from one village to another. In the year 1948, Chamarpura village was the worst sufferer from cholera. Many families were totally wiped out and some were so terror-stricken that they left the village to take shelter elsewhere. The inoculation scheme introduced by the Public Health Department not only helped in saving quite a few lives but also brought home to the Tharus the effect of preventive measures.

Diseases due to Natural Causes

Formerly, the Tharus attributed all their diseases to the evil spirit, as described by Crooke and other writers,¹ but, now they have begun to think in terms of natural causes. According to their beliefs, diseases may be broadly divided into those that grow from within the body and those that are

- I. Risley finds that the Tharus do not believe in natural diseases and natural death except only in physical decay. They seem to think that the malignant spirits cause fever, ague, cough, dysentery, fainting, headache, madness and pains of all kinds. They do not feel utterly helpless against these because of the reputed skill of the sorcerers who profess to have power to control the spirits of the air. Loc. cit., p. 315.

due to the external physical causes. The former include fever, small-pox, measles, cholera, dysentery etc., while the latter refer to all sores, cuts, burns and fractures. The internal diseases are caused by evil spirits, while the external ones attack the exposed parts of the body except in the case of malarial fever, which is, more or less, seasonal. But when they suffer from this fever in another season, they at once attribute it to the agencies of some evil spirit. Natural diseases have been proved by them to be curable through medicinal treatment and precaution about food and drink; and those caused by the influence of spirit or any other supernatural agency, only through magical devices, propitiation or invocation and sacrifices to the spirit concerned.

The Tharus believe that cold, cough and malarial fever are caused by drinking water after eating fried maize and that malaria may also develop from cold, whereas, the mosquitoes are the real carriers of this latter disease. The Tharus are now beginning to understand more about infectious and contagious diseases, such as, leprosy and venereal diseases. Today they avoid contact with a leper and segregate not only the person infected with the foul disease but his entire family. For this disease Chaman Singh and his whole family had to leave the village Sariyasara.

The Tharus may be said to have been free from venereal diseases, but in recent years, they have contacted some of these from outsiders. According to Bairagi Singh of Nakuliya, syphilis and gonorrhea are contacted, if a person urinates at a place where some one having the disease had urinated before. Lalmani of Alabirdi says, "These diseases are caused by excessive sexual intercourse and the infected woman is the greatest danger, for she becomes a carrier of the disease. Sometimes, gonorrhea may be contacted after a man has had intercourse with a woman during her menstrual period." Bairagi Singh related his own experience of contacting this disease in this manner. Excessive drinking, the Tharus believe, is also a cause for spreading venereal diseases. Sadhu Ram of Bawanpuri believes that he has contacted syphilis both as a result of excessive drinking and illegal sexual gratification.

He regrets it now by saying, "I have spent a lot of money over the treatment of this disease, but to no purpose. Life is a veritable hell for me. But death does not come to one who longs for it most."

Diseases Due to Supernatural Causes

Since the Tharus are not fully convinced of the causes of incidence of diseases, they naturally trace them to the evil spirits who are prone to chastise them often on flimsy pretexts or inattention. Hence, any illness, the cause of which is not known to them, is ascribed to the wrath of their deities, benevolent or otherwise. Moreover, the spirits are also held responsible for the protraction and intensity of natural diseases. For example, if a boil persists and does not show any sign of healing after the application of a tried cure of the indigenous herbs, then it is a sure sign that some evil spirit is at work. In spite of the fact that diseases are believed to be natural and contagious, there is not a single deity or spirit of the Tharus, which does not possess the power of inflicting various diseases on the people. *Thakur*, the only exception, is considered to be entirely benevolent. But, since the Tharus have borrowed him from the Hindu pantheon, evidently they have not learnt all about His powers, because, according to Hindu concept, *Thakur* is responsible not only for creation and preservation, but also for destruction. The minor gods and goddesses are also supposed to carry out His bidding.

The Tharus have a firm belief in the activities of *Mata Bhawani* (a collective name for seven associates or sister goddesses), the mother of diseases and epidemics—a belief universally held in the rural areas in India. Each one of these goddesses causes some particular sickness. Therefore, different offerings or sacrifices are made to each one separately, for instance:

(a) *Sitala* is responsible for small-pox ; therefore to her are offered cloves, betel-nuts, coco-nuts and *hom*.

(b) To *Durga*, who causes cholera, are offered a red flag and an iron tripod along with *hom*. In some villages the sacrifice of a goat is also considered necessary for her appeasement.

(c) To *Jwala*, who spreads malaria, is offered *hom* only.

(d) *Kalaka* gives ague.

(e) *Hulaka* causes vomiting of blood.

(f) *Purwa* causes insanity, which is rare.

(g) *Parwati* causes severe headache.

To these latter four goddesses only *hom* is offered.

Punyagiri, a Hill Spirit, afflicts children with convulsions and rickets. To her, are offered a goat, coco-nut and small silver cup.

The Bhut and Pisach

The evil spirits, popularly known as *Bhut* and *Pisach*, who are believed to haunt tanks, rivers, eddies and hills, *ber*, *semar* and *peepal* trees and also the burial sites, inflict the Tharus with various diseases. For instance, *Pachhauwan* and *Kharga bhuts* cause mental disorders and fever with delirium, though they do not afflict people of the locality to which they originally belonged. *Bagha* and other lesser spirits also attack people with ague and giddiness. The offerings to all these ghosts consist of a chicken or a goat together with liquor.

The Masani or Churelin

One of the dreadful evil spirits of the Tharus is the *masani*, the ghost of a woman who dies during pregnancy or at childbirth or from an accident. She attacks women with fever until the victim becomes violent and tries to hurt all those who attend to her.

Formerly, witchcraft was believed to bring diseases and disasters, but now this belief has disappeared from the minds of the Tharus. The anecdotes and stories about the magical powers of Tharu women, who were believed to transform men into animals or birds and to cause various

diseases are no longer accepted by the people and have a limited clientele. In Naini Tal Tarai, we have not found such women who possess the power of witchcraft and utilise it for such harmful purposes to cause diseases among their people.

Diagnosis & Treatment of Diseases

In case of an illness in a Tharu family, the first thought which comes to a Tharu is to consult a *Bharara*, the spirit-doctor and medicine-man. He finds out which spirit is responsible for the malady by feeling the pulse of a patient and by examining the nerves of all the fingers one by one beginning with the thumb. A *Bharara* of Bawanpuri told us how the various veins beginning from the thumb reveal the agencies which cause illness. For example, the veins of the thumb reveal *Pachhauwan* or *Kharga* as the cause of the malady, the second finger, *Bagha bhut* and other lesser spirits; the third finger, the *Mata Bhawani* and her accomplices; the fourth finger, natural diseases; and the little finger, *Masani* or *Churelin*. This method of diagnosing the disease and detecting the evil effects of deities and spirits is commonly practised by the *Bhararas*.

After diagnosing the disease, the *Bharara* cleanses his hands and feet, puts a handful of grain of rice, wheat or barley in a brass plate and pairs them off three times, each time reciting the following *mantra* to control the lesser spirits and to invoke the blessings of his gods and goddesses.

Mantra

After cleansing my hands and face, I worship you.
The brave son of *Anjani* may reside in my throat.
Oh *Hanuman*! protect the body.

If the *Bharara* finds the grain in pairs by counting three times over, he feels certain that the spirit is under his control.

Cure by Making the Appropriate Offering

After the *Bharara* acquaints himself with the nature and

cause of the diseases, he proceeds to apply the proper remedies to ensure the recovery of the patient. If he discovers that the disease has been caused by the goddesses, *bhuts* or *churelins*, he promises to make an appropriate offering to the agency of the evil spirits after the patient is cured, and the offering is prescribed by the tradition.

Cure by Mantra

The most powerful method of curing any disease, the Tharus believe, is to recite the appropriate *mantras*. There are *mantras* for various diseases, epidemics, snake-bite, and for driving away evil spirits, *bhuts*, or *churelins*. When a person is possessed by an evil spirit, he or she begins to cry and assumes a fearful appearance. The *Bharara* then catches hold of the hair or *choti* of the victim in his hand firmly and recites the following mantra to dispel the effect of the evil spirit.

Mantra

Where has 'Kalaiya'¹ come from ? What beautiful red bangles she has put on ?

The drunkards are drinking twelve maunds of liquor and eating meat of sixteen goats.

Kalaiya is roaming about intoxicated and every one is calling for help.

The evil spirits of all places, should be spell-bound.

If you control them by your magic, I will give you your due share of offering.

After a few hours of the recital of this *mantra* the evil spirit is believed to be under the full control of the *Bharara* and the patient is released from its clutches. The *Bharara* now offers a sacrifice of goat or a fowl to the spirit. The expenses incurred in the offering are met by the patient or his family. Palta *Bharara* of Rampura village claims to have cured many patients by the above method.

A much simpler method discovered and employed by Ganga Ram *Bharara* is to slap the cheek of the person

1. The goddess of death.

possessed by an evil spirit to drive it away. It was done in the case of Bairagi Singh's sister by this *Bharara*. Bairagi Singh told us "My own sister was possessed by *bhut* who began to torture her. Ganga Ram came and slapped my sister and drove the *bhut* out. He followed it up by offering a sacrifice of a fowl and a bottle of liquor to *Kusmatiya*".

For Epidemics of Cholera, Small-Pox and Other Diseases Caused by the Mata.

When the *Bharara* has diagnosed which of the seven goddesses has spread a certain disease or an epidemic, he recites the following *mantra* to win her favour.

Mantra

O ! *Mother Bhawani* ! have mercy on me today.

I will offer you a pair of cloves and sprinkle flowers over you.

You look very graceful under the *perpal* tree with a red flag.

I will offer '*hom*' to you by burning sandal wood powder on fire.

I will sacrifice a goat and offer its head to you.

The recitation of this *mantra* is generally accompanied by *hom* and other sacrifices to the goddess responsible for the disease to invoke her blessings.

To Cure Punyagiri Disease

The diagnosis of this disease is simple, but its treatment and cure involve a great risk for the *Bharara* himself. Therefore, an ordinary *Bharara* never takes up the responsibility of curing an attack of *Punyagiri*, because if he fails in his treatment, he is disabled in some way or inflicted with blindness. An expert *Bharara*, Raja Ram of Sujiya, has successfully tried this *mantra* for curing *Punyagiri* disease.

Mantra

A black bird is chirping.

O brown buffalo ! whom are you going for ?

The bow is made of green bamboo.

The arrows are made of *bijaiysar*.¹

Drive away *Punyagiri* Mother.

Or you swear by the name of *Nona Chammari*².

Raja Ram claimed that after reciting the above *mantra* seven times a day for several days over the grandson of Bhalemanas of Banjara village, he succeeded in curing the disease of *Punyagiri* and followed it up by offering a sacrifice of a goat, coconut, and a small silver cup in the name of the goddess.

To kill Germs in the Wounds of Animals

When an animal develops germs in the wounds of its body, the *Bharara* recites the following *mantra* to kill them.

Mantra

There were seven brothers.

All seven brothers fell on an evil day.

Throw a small stone to kill the enemy.

On my honour and my teacher's honour,

On the honour of *Iswar Gaura Parwati*,

If you still do not come under control, then

Nona Chammari will be appealed to.

To stop headache (*Adhaukhi*)

The *Bharara* blows his breath from his mouth on the forehead of the patient during the recitation of the *mantra*.

1. A kind of wood.

2. A renowned magician belonging to a scheduled caste, Chamar.

Mantra

A black and spotted goat is going to the *Kajari* forest.
Awake *Mohammada*, the Prophet, and drive the pain from
the head.

To Cure Ordinary Diseases and to Stop Burns and Bleeding

Bhaggamal's *mantra* has been very efficacious in a number
of diseases, burns and bleeding.

Mantra

*Lanka*¹ is surrounded by water like a fort by a mote.
Let magic work. Help ! Help ! Raja Ram.
Which spirits are coming ? The *Massan*'s spirit is coming.
Ghatyana and 'Sokha' spirits are coming
Sink half a yard of ground and drown the enemy,
As well as the *bhuts* and evil spirits.
Drown the 'mariya' and massan
I implore 'Phatama Bibi'² for her influence.
May God make the *mantra* effective.

Snake-Bite

The Tharus can distinguish certain species of snakes.
When a poisonous snake bites a person, the *Bharara* is called
to remove the poison from his body. He recites the following
mantras, blows his breath over the patient's limb and massa-
ges it with a downward stroke in order to bring down the
poison.

Dandi Mantra

The brave Mongoose fought against the serpent *Basuk*³
He first prepared for an attack and then roared.
The *Mongoose* came on his feet and stepped slowly
until his presence became known.

1. Ceylon.

2. The daughter of the prophet, Mohammed.

3. Mythological serpent God.

For a moment the serpent ran hither and thither.
 But *Mangoose* also followed him and depoisoned him.
 O beloved of Raja Ram, *Mangoose*, I keep your tail on the
 ground and say "Ram".

Garrason Mantra

*Garur*¹ asks his son to stay at home.
 I am going to feed myself. I will also bring something for
 you.
Garur asks, "Where is the mine of serpents?"
 As soon as his eyes fell on the serpents, he pounces on
 them.
 With his claws he catches the serpent, and manages it
 with his beak.
 When *Nagin*² finds him in danger she beseeches him with
 folded hands.
 Hear me, O *Garur* ! Please pardon him this time for my
 sake.

To protect the persons from snake-bite the *Bharara* recites
 different *mantras* known as *Kuraniya* and throws some stones
 after enchanting them with his spell.

Kuraniya Mantra (i)

Where are you going, O Serpent ?
 If you go ahead, you will meet water.
 If you recede you will meet *Garur*; you keep sitting here.
 Otherwise, the curse of *Raja Basuk* may fall on thee.

Kuraniya Mantra (ii)

I have made circles in my courtyard.
 If you cross them, you will be burnt down to ashes.

1. It is said that *Garur* (a bird) eats snakes.
2. The wife of the sanke.

Indigenous Prescriptions

In serious illness a Tharu stakes all his hopes on the *Bharara's* magical power, but for curing certain external injuries and natural diseases, he may use his own tried medicines. Some of the prescriptions are recorded below:—

For Cholera

The Tharus extract the juice from onion, mix it with liquor and give it to the patient to drink three times a day.

For Fever

They take juice from the tender leaves of a wild *Kanja* tree, boil it and take in the form of a drink.

For Pneumonia (Subiya)

(i) They prepare a plaster of opium, eggs of fowls and liquor, heat it and apply it on the patient's stomach.

(ii) They tie the seeds of a wild tree '*Udaslin*' round the patient's neck. They powder some seeds and give these in water for a week.

For Cough and Cold

They drink hot milk with a little turmeric mixed with it.

For Paralysis

They tie up the paralysed limbs of the patient with seven ropes. They prepare a mixture out of the roots of tobacco, white brinjal and '*ghunghuchi*' and give it to the patient to drink. The solution is also rubbed over the forehead and all the nails of the patient.

For Sore Eyes

They make a paste out of tender leaves of lemon, orange, mango, and mix alum with it to apply it over the eye-lids.

For a Vicious Type of Boil (*Gamhir*)

They prepare a paste from the roots of a wild *chita* tree to apply over the boil.

Medical Treatment by the Doctors

Now the Tharus are taking advantage of the medical treatment which is available at three Estate dispensaries of Khatima, Sitarganj and Nanakmata, though they use medicines only for ordinary diseases and external ailments. This fact is also supported by the doctors of the local dispensaries. The Tharus, like other country folks, have a fear of inoculation; they would even bribe the inoculators and vaccinators to escape. When the cholera broke out in Chamarpura it was a real problem for the doctors to persuade the Tharus to get inoculated. But now they are becoming aware of the fact that Paludrine is an efficacious drug for malaria; they would administer it themselves or receive it from the doctors. But in case of epidemics they still think medical aid to be futile and must resort to tribal worship of the goddess, *Bhawani*. The Tharus greatly overestimate the power of spirits, and their faith in the *Bhararas* is yet unshaken, though among the educated, the medical treatment is becoming popular. Hence, it can be said that their belief in the efficacy of the *Bharara's* *mantras* and methods of treatment has not been shaken for the reasons given below :—

(i) The Tharus still believe that if the disease has been caused by an evil spirit or any supernatural agency, no medical treatment will be effective, unless the influence of the evil spirit is removed by the *Bharara*. Even the educated, sometimes, stick to their old belief. Here is a statement of an educated Tharu, "Although I tried to avoid the *Bharara*, because I did not believe in his *mantras*, yet I could not

do without his help. Whenever I fell ill, the *Bharara* was the best man to help me and not the doctor, because, the *Bharara* could find out which evil spirit has afflicted me. Once I was suffering from bad malarial fever. I treated myself with quinine suggested by the doctor, but it had no effect. Then I sent for Chandan *Bharara* of Bawanpuri village. He touched my fingers of the right hand while reciting his *mantra* to invoke the spirit. I felt a great throbbing in the nerves of my fingers and immediately I felt relieved."

(ii) The Tharus generally depend upon the *Bhararas* not only because of convention but for the simple reason that the treatment of the *Bhararas* is less expensive, for they are paid for their services and offerings to the deities and spirits only after the patient is recovered. On the other hand, the doctors charge their fees and cost of medicines whether the patient is cured or not. Therefore, with uncertain and expensive medical treatment, the Tharus still hold their faith in their own medicine-men and spirit-doctors, the *Bhararas*, who are approachable on the spot.

On an analysis of the incidence of the diseases and their treatment among the Tharus we find that their contact with the outsiders has undoubtedly spread more diseases than they had known before. Not only specific diseases, such as, venereal diseases and leprosy have been introduced by outside contacts but epidemics have also spread more quickly. The spread of diseases has affected the growth of their population. For these imported diseases, the Tharus do not possess any efficient pharmacopoeia. Even their own indigenous methods are not sufficient to cope with their diseases. In fact their indigenous maladies are not entirely under their complete magical control. Some of the Tharus, therefore, have begun to show their indifference against the evil spirits and some do believe that much of their miseries could be alleviated, if proper medical aid were easily available to them. The conscious group among them is not so receptive as they were before, and well-to-do and advanced people have been encouraged to value medicines and medi-

cal assistance in hospitals and dispensaries. A concerted attack on the ignorance of the Tharus regarding medical aid is not likely to be opposed by them. On the other hand, they will be convinced of the real value of the medical treatment if they are supplied with efficient and effective medical facilities which will be within their economic reach. They have fought diseases and disasters and to a certain extent they have succeeded in their battle against them.

XIII

INCIDENCE OF CRIME

The Tharus have been, and on the whole, are still an honest, straightforward and peace-loving people. This is also true of other aboriginal tribes*. Hutton speaks of 'the

*Speaking of the Kacharis, honest and straightforward character, the missionary Endle observes, 'Apart from their love of rice-beer, it is pleasing to be able to say that among them are to be found many simple virtues of great price, honesty, truthfulness, straightforwardness and a general trustworthiness deserving of all honour'. (Sidney Endle, 'The Kacharis', 1911, p. 24).

Colonel Ward described the Baiga in 1870 as wild as the forests they live in.....they are independent, high spirited.....very well behaved, ready to oblige, and deserving every consideration for their orderly manner of life. (H. C. E. Ward, 'Report on the Land Revenue Settlement of the Mundlah district,' 1870, p. 36).

Excepting the Dhomb's, remarks Campbell, 'the Agency hillmen are the most honest and law-abiding people that I have ever had to deal with, and are singularly truthful. In the Gudame Hills, there are practically no police stations. Thefts and robberies are unknown and the only crime ever committed is an occasional murder induced by jealousy.' (R. H. Campbell, 'The Wild Tribes of the Vizagapatam Hills', Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society (Bangalore 1917), Vol. VIII, p. 3).

'The Bhil', says C. S. Venkatacher, are truthful unless spoilt by being "civilised". (Census of India, 1931, Vol. I, Part III. B, p. 56).

P. O. Bodding says that Santals are truthful and honest so long as they speak their own tongue but they are especially lying when they are taught at school' (Ibid. p. 105).

'Frankness and honesty', says Grigson, 'are still characteristic as ever of the hillmen and the wilder Bisonhorn Marias, and many an arraigned for homicide will state in court perfectly frankly, why it was essential to kill his victim and how it was done'. (Grigson, 'The Maria Gonds of Bastar', p. 95).

natural truthfulness and honesty of the tribal people'. Forsyth¹ states that 'the aborigines are the most truthful of beings and rarely deny either a money obligation or a crime really chargeable against them'. Colonel Tickell² was so impressed with the Hos' love for truth, honesty, their obliging willingness and their happy ingenious disposition that he would rather see them remain lawless than be brought under British Courts of Justice, which might end in destroying their virtues'. The honesty, sincerity, simplicity and truthfulness of the Tharus have been referred to by Crooke, H. R. Nevill and other writers. To talk of crime among them was itself a hostile act a few decades ago, for they were known to be exceptionally innocent and law-abiding people. There are many anecdotes to prove their proverbial honesty in respect to paying of their debts to the *Pahari* or *Desi* moneylenders. Sometimes, their honesty coupled with ignorance has been responsible for their paying a debt several times over, though it took several generations to do so. Therefore, the money lenders have exploited the Tharus to the full. But now the education and contact with people from outside have brought an awareness to them, and they now realize how they have been exploited and what they have suffered as its consequence. A few cases, however, have occurred in recent years, which indicate anti-social and criminal behaviour of the Tharus. The police records for the last ten years are enough to indicate the influence of contact particularly, in the incidence of crimes.

1. J. Forsyth, 'The Highlands of Central India', 1871, p. 164.

2. A quotation from Majumdar's 'A Tribe in Translation', p. 13.

TABLE XXIX

*Table showing number of criminal cases in Khatima and
Sitarganj Tahsils in 1940-49.*

Year	Crimes committed by the Tharus.	Crimes committed by Non-Tharus.	Total
1940	—	40	40
1941	2	49	51
1942	1	32	33
1943	—	34	34
1944	—	35	35
1945	—	49	49
1946	—	42	42
1947	1	72	73
1948	1	69	70
1949	3	79	82
Total	8	501	509
Percentage	1.57	98.43	

The striking difference in the number of crimes committed by the Tharus and non-Tharus proves how far the Tharus were induced in their criminal acts by their contact with the non-Tharus, and how far the increase in the incidence of crimes among the Tharus in recent years is traceable to this influence.

An analysis of the nature of the criminal acts gives us a further clue as to what circumstances drive a Tharu to commit violent crimes, such as, murder and cutting off the nose. The table XXX shows the type of crimes the Tharus have committed.

TABLE XXX

*Table showing different criminal offences as recorded by the
Police from 1940-49.*

Nature of offence	Number of offences
(i) Murder under section 302.I.P.C.	3
(ii) Cutting off the nose under section 326.I.P.C.	2
(iii) Theft under section 109 I.P.C.	1
(iv) Cheating and deceiving a person under sections 366, 373 and 420 I.P.C.	1
(v) Setting one's house on fire under Section 436 Cr.I.P.C.	1
Total number of crimes	8

(i) The murder of two *Pahari* money lenders at Nangamanath Bisaunta has become a legend and every Tharu feels proud of it. The popular version of the story as given by Sambal, one of the brothers of the accused, who was also convicted on suspicion but later on released, is as follows :—

“My grandfather took a loan of rupees one hundred from two *Pahari Sahukars*, money lenders. He could not pay off the whole amount during his life time, so before he died, he had a promise from his son, Phiru, to pay up the balance to his *Sahukars*. When Phiru, my father, enquired as to the amount he had to pay, the *Pahari Sahukars* informed him that rupees one hundred including the interest was yet to be paid. My father could only manage to pay rupees fifty towards it during his life time. When he was dying, he spoke to his eldest son, Chhedda, with tears in his eyes, “Oh my beloved son, promise me that you will not forget the debt of your grandfather”. After

my father's death my eldest brother Chhedda, took charge of the management of our household affairs, though he was too young to shoulder such a heavy responsibility. In addition to the worries of running a household, he was all the time reminded of his father's last injunctions. Year after year during the winter, the *Pahari Sahukars* visited our home and stayed sometimes for a month or more. My eldest brother had to feed them during their stay. Moreover, their horses sometimes damaged our crops, but my brother never made a fuss or complained about it. Each time he paid them rupees twenty to get rid of them. For five consecutive years he made this payment towards his grandfather's debt. In the sixth year they came to us with two or three people with them and demanded boldly a sum of rupees two hundred from my brother. He was stunned at their demand and asked how it came to such a big amount, when he had already paid up rupees one hundred to them. They explained that it was calculated on the basis of their own rate of interest and insisted that the amount was absolutely correct. They produced their documents to prove the calculation of the interest. My brother saw through their craftiness and was convinced of their fraud and ill-will. He was so incensed that his blood began to boil within him. However, he restrained himself and told them that they would have to wait, as he had no money to pay them just then. Thereupon, the *Sahukars* abused him and threatened to set his house on fire. My brother then promised to pay the sum to them, if they would wait till next morning. He took leave of them to collect rupees two hundred overnight and requested them to remain at his house. He left the house, but he had fully made up his mind to get rid of them by murdering them.

"When the whole village (including the *Pahari Sahukars*) were asleep, he quietly returned to his house, took an axe and beheaded the two *Sahukars*, who were fast asleep by then. After committing the crime, he threw away their cots and other belongings in a canal nearby, washed off the blood stains

and changed into new clothes. After that, he went to his maternal uncle's house. There he told his uncle that he had killed two thieves, who had come to his house and now they should go to lodge a report with the police officials at Khatima about this matter. His uncle, Bhaggamal did not believe his story and suspected something more serious noting his nervousness. He advised him to inform the *Padhan* of the village, Kadhe Ram, and the Patwari, Bikram Singh. So he ran to these people who visited the actual scene of occurrence and identified the dead bodies of the *Pahari Sahukars*. By this time the whole village was astir. The villagers including other *Paharis* lodging at my village flocked to my house. But by that time, my brother Chhedda had started along with the *Padhan* and the Patwari to Khatima Police station to lodge a report about this incident. They were overtaken by party of *Paharis* at the Lohiya Canal on their way. Both the parties arrived at the Police station at the same time, and gave their reports to the police officers, who detained them there, while they went for investigation on the spot where the murder had taken place.

"After a preliminary enquiry, the police officers returned to Khatima where both the parties had been placed in the custody of the police. Chhedda, Bhika and even I were severely beaten by the police officials. Without coercion from the police my brother, Chhedda, confessed that he had murdered the *Pahari Sahukars*, because they had been steadily cheating his grandfather, father and even himself.

"The Court sentenced all three of us to three month's Rigorous Imprisonment and only Chhedda was sentenced to death, but later on my brother Bika and I were set free."

This story shows quick decision with no pre-meditation and silent revolt against the gross exploitation on the one hand, and the inherent quality of truthfulness of a Tharu, on the other. The spirit of revenge in Chhedda was roused to such a temper at the continued fraud of the *Pahari Sahukars* that it led him to commit their murder. But he also confessed his guilt very soon.

(ii) A second murder was committed over the dispute about property among several brothers in Kanjabagh. When Bhajji broke away from his two brothers on account of frequent domestic quarrels between their wives, they distributed their property equally among themselves with the exception of a thatched roof. Since the partition took place in the month of July during the rainy season, it was decided among themselves that they would portion out the thatched roof after the rains in the month of February. But domestic quarrels between Bhajji and his brothers did not end there. In February, Jiwan Singh, the younger brother of Bhajji, began to undo the thatch and bamboo frame-work. When he was taking off the beams and poles with the help of a few other villagers, Dewi Ram, the son of Bhajji, brought out his axe and began to separate his share of the bamboo frame-work. Jiwan Singh interrupted him and asked as to what caused him to do so. Dewi Ram answered his uncle angrily that he was merely removing his share of the thatch. At the same time he called out his father reporting to him that the uncle was stopping him from removing his share of the thatch. Bhajji rushed upon his brother, Jiwan Singh, and attacked him with a *lathi* and asked his son also to deal him with blows. Thereupon, Dewi Ram attacked his uncle with his axe. When the younger brother of Jiwan Singh saw that his elder brother was being beaten to death, he pulled out a bamboo from the frame-work to protect him shouting at Bhajji, 'why are you killing your own brother?' Bhajji then attacked his second brother with his *lathi* and his son also joined in the dual. The result was that both Jiwan Singh and his brother succumbed to the outrage. The people of the village did not come to their rescue for fear that they might be involved in the incident.

When this case was brought to the notice of the police, Bhajji said that he alone was guilty of murdering his two brothers. Therefore, he was sentenced to transportation for life; and Dewi Ram was released. Later on, after further investigation, Dewi Ram was rearrested and sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for three years.

This murder was committed not for the sake of property or for a desire for the possession alone, but as a result of resentment. This, however, was considered as altogether an extreme case which received severe censure from the entire Tharu community.

(iii) Very recently a forest guard was murdered. The real culprits have not been traced thus far and the police is still continuing its search. The guard in question is supposed to have been murdered by some Tharus and the police has more or less arrived at the same conclusion. The story is that a batch of Tharus started for the forests near Sitarganj in a cart for hunting without the licence. These people were caught by a forest guard while shooting a deer. The guard abused them and threatened to bring the matter to the notice of the forest officials. As he had accepted bribes previously from these very hunters, they were quite sure that he would let them go as before by accepting the bribe of rupees one hundred. But this time, he refused to accept less than rupees three hundred. It was beyond their pocket to pay such a big sum, so the hunters refused to accede to his demand. The forest guard then asked them to accompany him to immediate officer to deposit their guns. They refused to do so and conspired among themselves to end the whole matter by shooting him. One of them fired a shot at him and then they all escaped from the forest. The dead body of the forest guard was found later after a thorough search of the forest. The police has arrested some Tharus on suspicion and has also confiscated their guns.

Though the culprits were bold enough to shoot the forest guard, they were not clever enough to foresee the danger of being traced out.

The Tharus have sometimes resorted to crimes of less violent nature. Revenge and jealousy have been found to be the root cause of such violent action. Two stories narrated below confirm this point.

(1) Amar Singh, the son of Bairagi Singh of Kaukhara, who had returned home on the 23rd February 1948 after serving a sentence of three month's rigorous imprisonment

and paying a fine of rupees five hundred under Section 326 I.P.C. for cutting the nose of another man's wife, narrated his story:—

“Munni had completed her ten years, and she was not yet married, because her elder brother, Karn Singh, who claimed himself to be an Arya Samajist and a great reformer, did not approve of her early marriage and instead decided to send her to school for education. Since there was no school in our village, she was asked to go to Patapara primary school. I was also reading in the same school at the time. Munni and I became fast friends, because we daily walked together to the school, but Karn Singh did not approve of it and asked his sister not to go with me. She submissively obeyed her brother who from now kept a close watch over her. All our happy associations came to an abrupt end, because of this strict vigilance not only by the brother but even by our school teacher who was instructed by Karn Singh to see that we were never together. This became unbearable to us. We both were upset, and one day we met secretly and decided to exchange letters. These were badly written, of course, but even then we could find some solace in our few broken sentences scribbled on a piece of paper telling each other about our heart-aches. I met her again in secret a week after. She began to weep and said to me, ‘how long can I put up with this?’ I consoled her by promising to marry her. She did not believe me, for I was already a married man. I then made a vow to take her as my wife at all cost. Both of us solemnly agreed that one who failed to keep the promise his nose would be cut off.

“After that we did not bother any more, for we were quite certain of our marriage one day. When she left her studies, her brother began to search a bridegroom for her. When Karn Singh came to know of her intention of marrying me, he lost his temper and asked her to marry any body else but me. He did not approve of his sister's marriage with me for the reason that I already had a wife. So, Munni was married to Phiru Ram of Bhara Bhuriya. I was dejected and frustrated in my love for her. Our vow was bro-

ken by Munni and I determined to avenge it by cutting off her nose.

“After her marriage, when she was going along with her husband to the latter’s village in a bullock cart, I waylaid her and bit off her nose with my teeth near Phuliya village, and escaped. A police report was lodged by her husband, Phiru Ram and I was taken into the police custody. Consequently, I had to undergo three months rigorous imprisonment and paid a fine of rupees five hundred.”

(2) Panchu of Pipaliya Pastoor village was very much perturbed at the bad behaviour of his own wife who fell in love with another man of the same village. He asked her a number of times not to lower his reputation, but she paid no heed to her husband’s exhortations and went on ignoring him. Her husband put up with her for sometime, until one night he bit off her nose with his teeth saying to her, ‘so now I have made you ugly so that your lover may not enjoy your beauty’. Immediately after the crime, he escaped from the house. She shrieked and yelled for help. People rushed to her house but they could not find any trace of Panchu. Next morning the *Mustajar* of the village, Kausilya, lodged a report at the police station of Khatima. Shortly after this Panchu was arrested and he confessed his guilt.

Thefts of property and cattle are rare among the Tharus. It was said of the Tharus in days gone by that there was not a single thief in their community, but now some have been found guilty of committing thefts. For instance, Mangal Singh was sentenced to one year’s simple imprisonment on a charge of cattle theft.

Reports regarding elopement with women seldom reach the police because both the parties settle such matters in their *Panchayat*. Once in a while, they have to approach the police to trace the culprits and to get their grievances redressed. For instance, Siwa Charan, the *Padhan* of Unchi of Mahuwat, lodged the complaint with the police on behalf of Chharra of Kalkatta.

"Lal Singh shifted his residence from Adda to Unchi Mahuwat and married his daughter, Bhajjo, to Phiraku on payment of rupees nine hundred. But another man, Chharra was already engaged to Bhajjo whose *Dikhnauri* ceremony cost a sum of rupees three hundred and seventy. The complaint of Chharra is genuine. Phiraku paid rupees nine hundred to marry Bhajjo; many people, such as, Jita, Bahadara and Ram Lal gave their signatures to this as witnesses."

The case was transferred from the police to a *Panchayat* and Lal Singh had to defray Chharra for the expenses of *Dikhnauri* ceremony, which Chharra demanded.

In cases of extreme enmity, some Tharus have gone so far as to set other people's houses on fire, which meant a great loss and untold sufferings to the families. Badri of Birikhera was reported to have set fire to Joga Chamar's house. Such cases of incendiarism do take place.

Before we close this chapter, it is necessary to indicate the status of the criminal and criminal intent, if any, after he has committed the crime and also the attitude of the community towards the convicts after their release. We have seen in the cases of murder and other serious crimes that the criminal seldom tries to run away after the commission of the crime. He may try to conceal it for sometime but sooner or later he does confess it. In almost all cases we have found that he has confessed his guilt at the preliminary enquiry by the police. The local police officers are also of opinion that a Tharu criminal can never abscond. Only in one case the accused tried to conceal his crime, but he was unable to keep the secret to himself too long.

Crimes in the Tharu community are not many, so it is very difficult to find out the attitude of the society towards the accused and his family. When an accused, he be a murderer or a thief, comes out of Jail, no purification ceremony of any sort takes place as is the custom among the Marias of Bastar State. But the wife of the accused may divorce him, so that her children may not incur the social stigma. Bindara, the daughter of Kanhai Padhan of Sariya Sara, for

instance, has divorced her husband who was once convicted along with her father-in-law for committing a theft. People are also afraid of marrying their daughters to released murderers. Devi of Kanjabagh, for instance, could not secure a wife for himself after his release. But the accused who is believed not to be guilty or is only an accomplice, may not be forced to a divorce by his wife and yet may not lose his social status. Amar Singh of Khakhera, for example, did not suffer any loss of prestige after his release, as his love story with Munni was too well-known.

The Tharus, as we have seen in this chapter, have not lost their virtues, such as, honesty, simplicity and hospitality to which they have held on for centuries. They have resorted to crimes when the circumstances have compelled them to do so, but the very next moment they, as honest people, confess their guilt. Many crimes are unknown to the Tharus even to this day. Unnatural vices, such as, rape, infanticide suicide and abortion are very unusual, rather non-existent among them. They are almost ignorant of cheating and blackmailing. They never degrade their woman by foolish laws and customs. A few of them may be cruel and apathetic, but the majority of them are kind, honourable and honest and there is little prospect as yet of their becoming otherwise.

XIV

DANCES AND SONGS

The aesthetic taste and artistic capacity which the Tharus possess are neatly expressed in their decorative art, specially fanciful basketry and wood carving, music, songs and folk-dancing. In their dances and songs, they express their innermost feelings, their joys and sorrows, emotions and passions. Whatever touches them in their daily life and whatever changes are seen in their material and social life are reflected in their folk-songs. These songs, lyrics and ballads have an intrinsic value in their life, for they not only serve as a healthy recreation to them in their leisure time, but more than this they give vent to the feelings of the Tharus.

Tharu Dances

The Tharu women do not dance except during the Holi, even then they rarely dance with men unless it is *Khichari* dance. The absence of women in the tribal dances may be due to the dominant and superior position enjoyed by them in their society. The Tharus have got their national dance *Tharuha Nach*, in which a man puts on a woman's dress and dances in accompaniment to the drums and cymbals. During the Holi festival men and women, both young and old, dance separately, but sometime both sexes may dance together, what they term as *Holi khelana*. There are two types of dances during the Holi festival, namely, *Sadi* Holi dance and *Khichari* Holi dance.

Fig 1

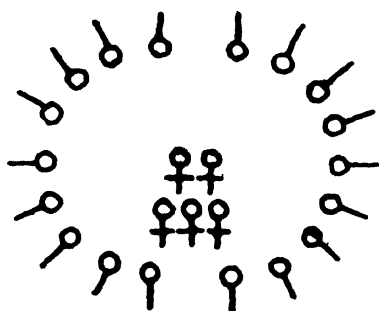


Fig. 2.

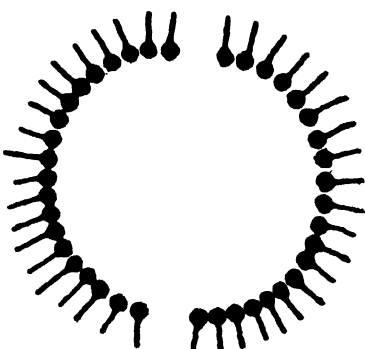
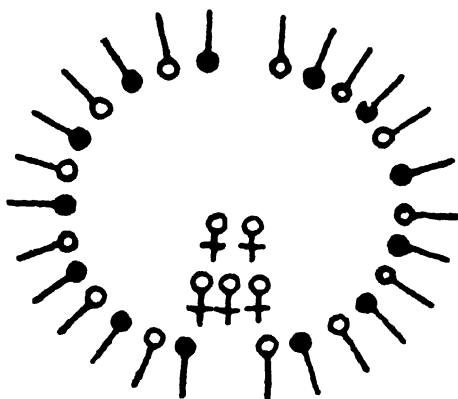


Fig. 3.



(○ stands for a man, ● for a woman and ♣ for a drummer)

Plate No. X. Showing Sadi and Khichari Holi Dance.

Sadi Holi Dance*

In this dance men and women dance separately. Men put on their wedding attire to give a colourful appearance to this dance. They stand in two semicircles facing each other and move in a circle while dancing. The drummers take their position in the centre of the circle. At one end of the circle begins the song in chorus and the other end repeats the same. All the dancers raise their feet from the ground and put them down simultaneously in unison to the rhythm of music of drums and cymbals. (Fig. 1)

In this type of dance women do not put on their marriage dress but take particular care to decorate themselves with best clothes and ornaments they may have. Women, like their menfolk, form two semicircles, only then arrange themselves according to their height when they stand behind one another. With one hand they hold the forearm of the dancer in front of them. They also dance in a circle with slower steps than men. One side starts singing and the other repeats it while dancing. Even if no music is played in their dance, they maintain rhythm through the songs they sing. (Fig. 2)

Khichari Holi Dance*

In this type of dance young men and women take their places alternately and dance in a circle with erect postures. The formation is the same as in the *Sadi Holi* dance and the drummers take their place in the centre as before. Now-a-days the practice of *Khichari Holi* dance is being abandoned, because the Tharu women have begun to feel shy and refuse to dance with men. (Fig. 3)

Tharuha Dance

Tharuha Nach is the national dance as it is typical of the Tharus and is most popular among them. This type of dance is not at all expensive for the Tharus

*Refer to Plate No. X.

since the charges of a dancing party range from rupees three to four per day specially when it is asked to go to another village to give its performance. A man dressed in a woman's attire dances to the accompaniment of drums, *mirdang* and cymbals. It is common for grown-up boys to take to this professional dancing. Some of them have distinguished themselves as skilled dancers and also display other tricks while dancing. Thus Sankar and Chhulla have earned considerable name for dancing and they are in demand all over the Tharu country. They move several brass plates on the tip of their fingers while dancing. The dancers show all kinds of physical feats and movements to give fuller expression to the meaning of the song, they may be singing. The party of musicians and drummers follow him in his pose and all his movements but the *nachakaiya* must be in the centre and the musicians arrange themselves round him. The *nachakaiya's* parties are generally invited at *chhathi*, *Dikhnauri* marriage, Diwali and *katha* ceremonies.

Although *Tharuha Nach* is quite popular among the rank and file, it is losing its popularity among the educated Tharus, because they invite professional dancing girls and other dramatic parties in their ceremonies. If a Tharu arranges for a professional dance, he receives social approbation. This change is deplorable, for the Tharus are losing one of their simple, original and traditional forms of tribal entertainment.

Tharu Songs

The folk-songs of the Tharus, as has been said before, depict their joys and sorrows, and their changing moods. These songs play a very significant role in making their life cheerful and sometimes lightening their burdens. In short, they represent the whole philosophy of their life. The authorship of their songs is obscure, but one thing is certain that they compose their own free verses and weave into them any theme or idea that strikes their fancy. These songs have no

individual poet behind them and are the product of the whole community. In fact song belongs to no poet. He, who says it, simply knows how to sing it. It is the folk which pours its own flood of poetry over far off events and so brings about the epos. So these songs are indigenous to the Tharus.

Although the Tharus do not have any formal classification of their folk-songs, they can be roughly divided into certain more or less well-defined categories :—

- (i) General songs.
- (ii) Songs for the special occasions.
- (iii) Liturgical songs.
- (iv) Dance songs.
- (v) Songs of women.
- (vi) Festive songs.
- (vii) Legends.

(i) General Songs

The songs belonging to this category can be sung by all the Tharus on all occasions. They may sing these songs in fields and forests and women may also sing when they sit by their fire-side. These songs are quite popular, for they are very rich in fancy. In the following song a Tharu singer expresses the yearning of a woman's heart who pines for her husband, who has parted from her, for she loves him and feels as if a fish out of water. Her passion is further increased by the approach of the rains.

Song

Without my *Piya* my heart aches, and I am pining for him.
I am pining as fish pines for water.

The month of *Asadh* has come and the dark clouds hover
the sky.

In the palace even her cosy bed does not bring her any
relief.

Without you how *chakor*¹ and *kokila*² can chirp.

1. A bird.

2. Nightingale.

Without you how can *brajbala*¹ live ? How can peacock dance ?

It is drizzling all the time. I am pining for you.

In another song a woman is feeling the pangs of separation because her husband has gone away just like Krishna parted from *Gopikas*.

Song

Kanha has left us after twining us in his love, let there be a curse on thee for all the time.

It is very difficult to love, Oh *Radhika*, once you have given your heart you cannot escape.

No one can win such a love, the heart is throbbing in despair.

The tears falling on the bodice and the necklace have made them wet.

(ii) Songs for Special Occasions

The Tharus, like other castes, sing special songs on special occasions. Child birth provides a main occasion for *Badhai* songs, while *Suhagi* songs are sung during marriage ceremony. *Badhai* and *Suhagi* songs have already been given in the VIth and VIIth chapters in connection with the birth and marriage ceremonies but a few of these are given here as samples.

Badhai Song

No one could find out the secret of the tailor.

Of what the needle and thread are made ?

Who will stitch for ten months ?

The needle is made of gold, and the thread of silver.

And Ram will stitch for ten months.

Suhagi Song

They beat the drums all around, and a tent is being pitched in an orchard.

1. A girl of Brajmandal (home of Lord Krishna).

In the orchard the marriage party with the elephant and horses has been accommodated.

The bridegroom is accommodated in the bride's courtyard. How to feed the elephants and horses, and how to entertain the party?

What to offer to the bridegroom who has come to the bride's house?

Feed the elephants and horses on gram and the marriage party on food.

Please the bridegroom by offering the bride.

(iii) Liturgical Songs

Due to contact with the Hindus the Tharus have included a number of Hindu gods and goddesses in their pantheon as we have already described. This has also brought about a change in the themes, of their folk-songs with the result that many of their songs depict anecdotes and the philosophy of Hindu religion. They now sing songs connected with Lord Krishna, Raja Ram Chandra, other Hindu gods and goddesses. Sometimes these songs also contain mythological religious stories which relate the sacrifice of Raja Harish Chandra and devotion of Dhruwa. The Tharus have directly adopted these religious mythologies from their Hindu neighbours and have described them in their tribal dialect. In the following song we find a Tharu surrendering himself to God and begging His help in the moments of his despair.

Songs

Oh my Lord! it is only you who can protect my honour.
You rescued the elephant from the crocodile, you know all
the secrets of our inner hearts.

You heard the cry of the tortured devotee Pahlad.
You came in disguise of a Brahmin and deprived the King
Bali of his possessions of the world.

You measured the whole earth in three steps: you also
built a hut of leaves.

When the *sari* of Dropadi was pulled by Dussasan and the gallant warriors like Arjun were helpless.

In a crowded court of the King you rescued her from the shameful act, you, the Protector!

The following song describes the birth of Lord Krishana:—

Song

Lord Krishna has taken his birth in *Braj*.

On eighth day of the month of *Bhadaun* in the dark overclouded night.

On Wednesday, the *Rohini** will begin, the moon will be visible only after midnight.

In his feet there is a mark of lotus flower and a wheel. His beauty is indescribable.

The guard were asleep but are now awake when Basudew takes Krishna out.

If Basudewa moves forward, he has to face the river Jamuna, If he recedes ! he hears the lions roaring in the forest.

Kanha of *Braj* hangs his feet to help his father in crossing the river.

Basudewa crosses the river and reaches Krishna to *Gokul*.

He carries away the daughter of Jasoda and replaces her with Krishna.

Jasoda is now holding Krishna in her lap,
All kinds of felicitations are being made,
Because Lord Krishna has come from Mathura.

In the next song, a vivid description of Lord Shiva who came to see Lord Krishna is given.

O a girl companion ! a young saint has come.

Lord Shiva has descended from the *Dhur* mountains; he has serpents hanging from his head.

In one *jata*¹ he possesses all *yoga* and in another he keeps the mother Ganga.

He is riding on his bullock, *Nadiya*, with his wife Gaura. Jasoda, the queen, comes out with a plate covered with her one corner of her *sari* for the waiting saint.

1. Long twisted locks of hair.

* A star.

I shall not accept the treasures of the world, nor the riches
you may give.

Now she comes out with *Kanhaiya* in her lap.

Shiva goes five times round Krishna and inspires the
mother with greater devotion.

(iv) **Dance Songs**

The songs belonging to this category are sung only by the dancer, *nachakaiya*, to the accompaniment of *mirdang* and cymbals. These dance songs are an unique attraction at Diwali when the Tharus observe the *Barshi* ceremony. These songs depict a philosophical reflection on life as revealed in a number of songs already given in connection with Diwali. An illustration is given below to show how the human soul compared to a parrot is confined temporarily in an earthen cage and breaks away from it.

Without the parrot the cage is useless.

Of what your cage is made? Of what the strings are
made?

Your cage is made of dust, the strings are made of silk.

In addition to the songs sung during the Diwali, whenever the *nachakaiya* gives some feats of his dance on the occasions of *Dikhnauri* and marriage etc., he sings those songs which consist of humorous dramatic dialogues and pleasant lyrics. Each line of the song is initiated by the dancer and is then followed up by chorus and dancing. But these days the Tharus are developing a dislike for their own songs and are borrowing cheap cinema songs which seem to give them more pleasure than their own old tribal songs. Here a few of the old tribal dance songs are given.

In the following song, a woman fails to understand why her husband has forgotten and deserted her in her prime of youth. She is so disappointed as to commit suicide, but then she stops and hesitates to do so.

For which mistakes of mine, O husband! have you
forgotten me?

The life is very short.

My husband has deserted me in the prime of my youth. I
will commit suicide.

What wrong have I done, O my God! He has left me in
the forest.

I have neither shady trees nor a garden of flowers where
I could sit and console my heart.

O my husband! please forgive me for my wrongs.

What should I do with my ornaments? Whom should I
now show my decorations?

A Tharu is very inquisitive to know about the physiologi-
cal make-up of human body. Therefore he is requesting his
Guru to tell him all about it in the following song.

O *Satguru*! Have mercy on me and tell me!

O *Guru*! may I ask you, how have you created human
body?

Five elements have been responsible for the creation of
this world with nine continents.

His word is gone out from place to place and *maya* is
illusionary.

The sky has been spread over the earth, as it were a tent.

The body returns to the dust but still spirit hovers and
puzzles human mind.

(v) Songs of Women

In this category fall those songs which are exclusively sung
by women with the accompaniment of their favourite instru-
ment. A group of women, young and old, assemble together
and sing songs which generally concern the women themselves
and vividly reflect their joys and sorrows. Complaints
against their husbands, separation from their lovers, compla-
ints against their mother-in-law, in fact all the situations of
domestic life find an expression in these songs.

In song No. (i) a woman complains of the bad treatment
of her husband towards her. She likes her childhood as she
has enjoyed more liberty during that age at her parent's
place but youth has brought new problems to her.

Song (i)

Today my husband has beaten me under my own roof.
When I was young, I rejoiced in the lap of my mother.
Wherever I liked, I roamed here and there.
When I was grown up, black soot looked beautiful in my eyes.
I smiled or laughed and sometimes loosened the knots of my bodice.

In song No. (ii) the woman praises her husband and complains of her mother-in-law who asks her to do all kinds of tiresome work of the family. Sometimes she commands her to clean the hearths but her husband defends her so that her hands may not be blackened. In this way her husband comes to her rescue in her domestic worries.

Song (ii)

The voice of my husband is very dear to me as it attracts me like that of a bird,
My mother-in-law asks me to cook the meal and clean the hearth and the utensils.
But my husband does not permit me to clean them lest I may catch cold.
My mother-in-law asks me to pound the rice and grind the wheat.
But my husband does not permit me to do it lest my hands may be blistered.
My mother-in-law asks me to make the bed,
But my husband does not permit me to do it lest there may be an increase in the progeny.

In song No. (iii) a woman deliberately quarrels with her husband. She does not leave her husband till he promises to supply her with whatever she desires.

Song (iii)

O my husband! I will quarrel with you in the noon.
The earth will be your *lehanga**.

Different clothes of women.

The clouds will make your *odhani** and *katiya*¹ your *chunari*.^{*}
 The snake will serve as strings.
 Necklace of scorpions and laces of horrids.
 Sun will be your nose-ring.
 Stars will give you small rings, and half moon will be
 your *bindiya*.^{*}

(iv) Festive Songs

The songs of this group can be sung by the Tharus, men, women or children only at certain festivals. As Holi is the most important festival for the Tharus, Holi songs form a great bulk of their folk literature. They tell the stories of Lord Krishna and his life. The general theme of the Holi songs centres round love and separation. Sometimes a woman feels jealous of another woman loving her husband. In the first Holi song given below, a woman calls her husband very cruel and pines for him throughout the year in all seasons but each season brings to her new desires, hopes and aspirations which, when unfulfilled, turn into despair, and despondency for her.

Holi (Barahmasa)

(i)

The cruel husband has deserted *Radhe* and fell in love with *Kubji*.

The month of *Sawan* looks awful without *Syam* and in *Bhadaun* the husband is away.

He promised to come to me in *Kunwar* and to go to *Kubji* in *Kartik*.

In *Aghahan* all women enjoy, the *Pus* is very cold.

He is again absent in the early spring of *Magh* and in *Phagun* all play Holi.

Banraiya blossoms in *Chait* and bears fruits in *Baisakh*.

Jeth brings a very scorching heat, and in *Asadh* the houses leak.

The next Holi song contains a note of passion from the husband but the wife does not like to be frequently disturbed

1. A thorny tree.

* Ornaments and clothes for women.

by her husband in her sleep. She requests her husband to do whatever he may like but he must let her sleep peacefully.

(ii)

Let me sleep full of bliss, O my husband! my eyes are full of drowsiness.

In every moment the *anchal* is set aside by the wind and my breasts feel coolness.

Whatever you desire you may do, O husband! and quench the thirst of your heart.

If I had a garland of *tulsi*¹, I would have asked you to put it around your neck.

The songs sung on other festivals, viz, *Bari Charai Chhoti Charai, Tij*, have already been described.

(vii) Legends

Of all the songs, the legendary songs are a rich treasure among the Tharus. Their most famous legend² is *Chaneni*. It is very rich in substance and rhythm and deals with emotions of love in a free verse form. It is known only to a few old Tharus who are very much respected for their art of reciting it in its original form. Here are some verses from it.

Chaneni

O *Sursuti* ! How can I offer you a red garland ?

First drop is that of water, and second that of blood;

1. A sacred plant of the Hindus, having cooling effect.

2. In Tharu dialect Chandeni is known as Chaneni but it refers to the same legend as the name of the lover resembles in the legends.

S. C. Dube writing about the origin of this legend says :—

“Near Arang in the Raipur district, there stands a monument commemorating the memory of the beautiful princess Chandeni and her gallant lover Lorik and their love. In wealth of imagery and subtle descriptions, Chandeni can easily win for itself a place of honour in the folk-poetry of India. In fact, the legend of Lorik and Chandeni has already travelled far and captured the hearts of village folk in Bundelkhand and also in other parts of the United Provinces” S. C. Dube. ‘Field Songs of Chhattisgarh’, p. 8.

The third drop created flesh and fifth one, two hands and ten fingers.

Sixth drop gave life to the flesh. In the seventh month *Sarwan* was born.

No one should be born in the eighth month, for he shall be a pauper.

The majority in this world are born in the ninth month but Chanda was born in the tenth.

In the eleventh month *Lorakh* was born, in the twelfth *Bawan*, in the thirteenth month hardly any one is born.

O Brahmin ! please come and sit near my door, consult your books and tell us about the birth of my daughter.

I will give you *dachhina* or a present of a black cow.

The Brahmin opened his books and found out the stars governing the destiny of the daughter Chanda.

After consulting the first book the Brahmin said, "A star governs her eye brow, she will create scandals."

After consulting the second book he pronounced, "The stars govern daughter's breasts, she may be loose in character by birth".

After consulting the third book, he declared, "The stars govern her thighs, she will entrap the whole village."

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Day by day, the lovely Chanda begins to grow up and goes to play far and near.

The girls play the games suited to the girls, while Chanda plays the games of the boys.

The girls play with the girls but Chanda plays with the boys.

During the day she plays *duraha matiya* and in the night she cooks meals.

While cooking meals, her body perspires and her breasts are warmed up.

The swing is hanging in her father's garden, all the girls are going to enjoy swinging.

Koyal Rani is also going for the same purpose, while Chanda is following her mother.

X **X** **X**

Daughter— "No engagement and no marriage for me, please."

× × ×

When they found a good bridegroom, they could not find a good house ; so they do not know what to do.

Negi Bamhan—"Dwij and Tij have been fixed for Marawo ;
sixth and seventh for wedding."

The wedding procession of Bawan started with all pomp and show and arrived at the bride's village after a number of days.

Is there any rose as red as colourful *Radhi* ?

*Punjaniyan**, *anwar**, *bichhiya** and *newar* tinkle on her feet,

She struts like a peacock.

Thinner than the betel leaf, more yellow in complexion than turmeric with a thin face and red cheeks

She struts like a peacock.

In the above song, Radhika, the beloved of Lord Krishna, has been compared to a red rose, betel-leaf, turmeric and peacock. These similies are in the imaginative reach of the Tharus and, therefore, find their full expression in the song.

The delights and disappointments of lovers or beloveds, the complaints against mother-in-law and the husband, pining for the cruel and heartless husband, joys and felicitations at birth and marriage ceremonies, child-like dependence of gods and spirits, transitory nature of this world and the philosophy of soul leaving the weak and frail human frame—these, as we have seen, form the important themes of the Tharus' songs which have been handed to them from one generation to another by word of mouth, without being penned down by an individual. These songs are the richest treasures of their culture which they have managed to preserve so far, though their growing contacts and education have brought forth some apathy towards their native songs and national dances by importing cheap film songs and prostitutes' dances. But at the same time the contacts with the Hindus have enriched the poetry and contents of the folk-songs of the Tharus, as many mythological stories and religious anecdotes of Hindus like Sudama and Krishna, Mordhwaj Lila, the birth of Lord Krishna, visit of Lord Siwa to Krishna are reflected in their tribal songs. The changes in their material culture and household possessions have also influenced the themes of their

*Ornaments worn on ankles and fingers of women's feet.

folk-songs. For instance, the Tharus have recently composed a Holi song describing a cycle—a favourite possession of a few well-to-do Tharus.

O, the owner of the cycle! let me see your boldness, you speak a foreign language.

You have made round wheels with spokes closely fitted into them.

They have been fitted at equal distance, the beauty of the cycle is undescribable.

With your feet you move the pedal while occupying your seat,

It is all a balance of eyes, while holding the handle of the cycle.

Wearing shirt, waist-coat and coat,

Occupying the seat in a beautiful manner, your hair are hanging over your face,

My husband has stolen some money from my cash box.

He has spent the money over the tyres and tubes in the shop.

He has also taken valve tubes, pump and connection.

He has pumped air in the tubes of the wheels which are moving at a great speed, O my God.

Thus we find that there has been a great change in the themes of their folk-songs but so far as their rhythms and expressions are concerned they have kept to their old forms of composition. However, their dances and songs represent a very vital part of their culture. Their problems and difficulties, sometimes their customs and practices, are reflected in their songs which are actually established documents—an authentic and unshakable witness to an ethnographic study of the moods of the Tharus, their love and hatred, their devotion and despair, their divination and propitiation.

XV

GAMES AND RIDDLES

The Tharus have a large variety of games and amusements. Some of the games, like *Duduwa* and *Labbasahi* have been borrowed by them from their neighbours. Most of the games are played by boys and girls separately and certain games are prescribed only for particular seasons and months. For instance, the boys and girls play *Hanna* and *Jhinjhi* respectively in the months of October and November. A number of popular games are described below.

Gargar

Eight or ten boys play this game. They fix a line measuring twelve yards or so in length according to the number of players. Two stones are placed at each end of this line. One boy is selected to guard the line when the rest attempt to cross it. If he catches or touches one of them as he attempts to cross over from one side to the other, he makes captive of the boy whom he catches. But he must touch the body and not the clothes of the players. Now his captives also help him to catch the players and add to their strength, but only one at a time does the capturing. The first boy gives the command for the captives to take their turn for catching. The game ends when all are made captives.

Duduwa*

This game is played by the Hindu boys under a different name, *Du Du*. The players select two tallest boys and call them kings or leaders. The rest of the boys pair off accor-

*It is a modified form of *kabaddi* played in the plains of Uttar Pradesh.

ding to their height. Each pair goes off and decides on some name, such as, sword and sheath, gram and *masur*. They return to the leaders and say '*Dagmag sany sany; Dagmag sany sany*' to each of them by turn. The leader asks, 'what have you brought'. The boys answer 'gram and *masur*.' The leader says, 'open the rates'. Then the boy representing the gram is taken by one leader, while the boy representing *masur* goes to another. In this way, the players are divided into two parties under two leaders. Now three parallel lines are marked on the ground. The two outer lines are guarded by the players of each party. Then one boy at a time from each side runs to touch the boys of opposite party while shouting '*du du*' and retaining his breath. In case he succeeds in touching one or two of them, they drop out of the game. But on the other hand, if he is caught by them and runs out of breath, he also falls out of the game. If he comes back to his own party even without touching any one but still holding his breath he is given another chance. In this way, every player of either side is given a chance. The party loses the game if all of its players fall out of the game first.

Rug Rug Bater

The players mark a big circle on the ground and stand inside it. The tallest boy represents the *Bater* and walks on his hands and feet like an animal. The *Bater* tries to touch other players by stretching his legs. If he manages to touch any one of the players, that player becomes a *Bater*, a companion of the former *Bater*. Now he also must follow this leader. If any player falls out of the circle he also becomes a *Bater*. The game ends when all the players become *Baters*.

Ektangari

This game is almost similar to that of Rug Rug Bater and is also played according to the same rules except that the players hop on one leg like a bird when they try to touch the other players in a big circle.

Labbasahi

This is a favourite game of the Tharu boys, though the Hindu boys play the same under a different name *Siyar Danda*. This game is played by older boys specially when they take their cattle out for grazing. The boys climb up a *jamun* tree and the leader of the game stands under it. Then one of the boys comes down the tree and throws a small stick very forcibly on the ground, passing it under his thighs. While the leader runs to pick up this stick, the boy who has thrown it climbs up the tree. Now the leader has to guard the stick as well as he must touch the boys on the tree. When he manages to touch any player he himself now throws the stick and climbs up the tree and the player thus touched by him takes his place. When a player fails to touch another, he becomes the laughing stock among other players.

Chara

Four boys play this game. Each boy throws four cowries on the ground in such a manner that they must fall with face downwards. Points are scored when all the four cowries fall in the same manner. If a boy succeeds in throwing them in this manner he strikes one of these cowries against another. If he fails his target, another boy gets his chance. In case all the four cowries happen to fall facing upwards, every boy makes a rush to pick them, because he secures for him as many points as many cowries he catches. It is the game of twenty points. The first winner is he who can make twenty points. The loser has to go on guessing the number of cowries the winners may be holding in their hands until he makes a right guess.

Atakan Chatakan

This game is played by little girls. Four or five girls sit down and stretch out one hand with palm facing upwards. On this outstretched palm they put the other hand with little finger fixed in the centre of the palm and the rest of the

fingers look like a fan. The leader touches each of the out-stretched fingers beginning with the thumb, repeating this couplet.

The curd is delicious.

The trees and creepers blossom and *karela* bears fruits in *Sawan*.

When the leader's fingers touch the hand of the last girl, ...puts these questions to her while she answers in the following manner:—

Question—Who is the owner of this horse?

Answer —The horse belongs to my father.

Question—Where has your father gone?

Answer —He has gone to the market.

Question—What things has he brought from the market?

Answer —*Bhuja* and sweets.

Question—Will he give me?

Then the girl angrily replies.

I will let a black dog to bite you.

After that she turns her palm on the right side and says,

My horse, be seated and drink water.

Similarly, for every player the leader repeats the same. In the end all the players place their palms on top of another's palm and finally the leader strikes each palm saying a nonsensical couplet after which every one catches the ears of her neighbour reciting '*kanta kanta chemen*'.

Hanna

The boys make a pair of horns of a deer with sticks and decorate them with grass rings and flowers. A boy of ten or twelve years of age is selected to be the *Hanna* boy. He wears these horns on his head holding them with his hands, and keeping a bell in one of his hands. Then the boys divide themselves into two groups to sing songs and all of them follow the *Hanna* boy. One group initiates singing and another group repeats it.

Hanna Song (i)

At your departure my eyes are shedding tears as I am
repenting for my excessive love.

Due to my selfish desire, I begged of you and persuaded
you by holding your hand.

After his desire was satisfied he did not even care to talk
to me.

If I had known that Mohan would act so cunningly I
would have had him write down his love on a piece
of paper with a stamp.

Hanna Song (ii)

He is playing his flute to persuade me, an innocent *Brajnar*.
Of what your flute and *ben*¹ are made ?

Has your flute only one tune ? Has your *ben* only two tunes ?

My flute is made of green bamboo, *ben* is made of gourd.

My flute has nine tunes and the *ben* has ten.

The boys sing these songs at the door of every house in
their village and sometimes they even go to the neighbouring
villages. Thus boys of Alabirdi and Kotra go to Naugama-
nath Bisaunta for playing the game of *Hanna* and the boys of
the latter village return the same game with their visitors.
Every house gives some rice or maize to these boys. Thus
they collect quite a few seers of grain. On the last day they
immerse the *Hanna* in a nearby river with due ceremonies
like the dead reciting this couplet :—

Our *Hanna* is going to an alien land

Let us give it a pair of *dhoti* only.

After the ceremonial immersion of the *Hanna* all the boys
take a purificatory bath and return to their village.

The grain thus collected is sold and the proceeds are
equally distributed among the participants.

Jhinjhi

The unmarried girls of the village gather together at one
place in the evening. One of them carries an earthen pot with

1. A kind of musical instrument.

numerous holes and a lighted earthen lamp on her head. This pot is known as *jhinjhi*. Her followers divide themselves into two groups. One group initiates *jhinjhi* songs and the other group repeats them. While they sing, the girl with *jhinjhi* on her head moves around and dances. As in *Hanna*, the girls in this game also go from house to house in their village singing these songs.

Jhinjhi Song (i)

O *Balam*! the bird of the cage has flown away to the heaven.

What have you kept in this cage, one parrot and two birds. The door of the cage is broken and the parrot and birds are set free. How happy they are!

Jhinjhi Song (ii)

Hand over the basket of flowers, O *Bhauji* ! as I am going to collect the mangoes.

I collected the mangoes under one tree and the next and now I came to the third one.

I see the Muslims returning from their hunt.

Where should I hide the basket and where should I hide my necklace?

The girls are given some rice, maize or money. The participants distribute the share of the sale proceeds among themselves. After that they immerse the *jhinjhi*, dressed in multi-coloured clothes, in the river and take their purificatory bath.

Chilgari

The latest modern game which the Tharu boys have invented is to immitate the movements of an aeroplane as they have seen it flying over their region. Two strong boys join their hands firmly and call out a little boy to swing and flutter himself over their joined hands. The little boy copies the movement of an aeroplane. The other boys shout 'the *chilgari* (aeroplane) has come'.

Riddles

Besides the games, the Tharu boys and girls have a keen competition and devote much of their evening time in guessing the answers to the riddles current in their habitat as their own intellectual heritage. Even the older men show their intellectual wits by playing at these riddles. The visitors are also given a test to guess the riddles to prove their intellectual superiority. Woe-be to those who fail in this test of simple and so-called uncultured people. A collection of selected riddles is given here. Some of the riddles are humorous, while others strike a deeper meaning, for the phenomena which the Tharus observe in their daily life are reflected in some of these riddles. A few of them express vulgarity by having a double meaning.

Riddles and Their Answers

(1)

It went this and that way. (Sight)

(2)

You sow in the middle and harvest all around. (A grinding stone)

(3)

Leave it to me and you may sleep. (A door)

(4)

If you go, you leave it to me. (A door)

(5)

A little girl is tying her waist. (A broom-stick)

(6)

A little boy, a great magician, shoots an arrow. (A scorpion)

(7)

In the heart of forest the creeper is spreading. (Path)

(8)

If you cannot solve my riddle, I will hammer your head.
(Chissel and hammer)

(9)

She has gone to the market leaving the red hen covered.
(Fire)

(10)

Your wife fetches the water, you; the Pandey, break the cow
dung. (Liquor of Mahuwa)

(11)

In the day time it hangs down, at night it is fastened up.
(A chain of a door)

(12)

Something has many colours and it carries three feet long
hair. (A peacock)

(13)

You put in the white but pull it out red and sit and beat it
out. (Iron)

(14)

There is a wall with two doors, you press the doors to throw
out something. (Nose)

(15)

There is a deep gorge of fire but its banks are smooth
There are thirty-two stairs in rows. (Tongue and teeth)

(16)

A cattle-shed with two apartments.
Two persons are needed to climb the thatches to clean them.
(Nose)

(17)

Something goes out and comes within a moment. (Tongue)

(18)

The pebble is small and has seven holes. (The face of a man)

(19)

It neither blossoms nor does it bear fruit, but still it fills a
basket. (Rubbish)

(20)

There is a mark of a hand over a good man's back.
(Cow dung cake)

(21)

I have beheaded the scorpion yet I am neither hurt nor
killed any one. (Nails)

(22)

There are eight bones and rest all are intestines. (A cot)

(23)

There is a real animal which has neither a bone nor a back.
(Leeches)

(24)

A black deer is grazing very slowly. (Lice)

(25)

It blossoms one by one, it ripens in hundreds. (Earthen
pitchers)

(26)

A good man has thorns on his head. (Small lobster)

(27)

An old woman with a hunched back has her breasts in the
stomach. (A kind of fishing trap)

(28)

The cow gave birth to a bone, out of it came forth the young
ones. (The eggs of a hen)

(29)

A piece of meat is hanging in the heart of forest. (A kind of
fruit with insects inside).

(30)

A tree without any roots or leaves. (A kind of tree)

(31)

There are no bones, no flesh, yet it is very smooth. (Banana)

(32)

As it grows it puts on more rings and ear-rings. (Sugar-
cane plant)

(33)

Father is rough, the son is smooth, grandson has a moustache.
(Mangoes)

(34)

A good man has an opening in his chest. (Wheat)

(35)

The knife of the forest is found in the field. (Sweet potatoes)

(36)

The tree is slender, the roots are strong.
Fruit comes first, and flowers afterwards. (Paddy)

(37)

Curd is set in a pot which hangs down. (Cotton)

(38)

I was simple enough when born.
Many suitors came for me, when I grew up. (A bean)

(39)

It blossoms by thousands, and bears fruits by millions,
Neither the beasts nor birds eat them. (Betel-nuts)

(40)

We have taken out the lever of the goat, it still settles down.
(Rice)

(41)

A small pond makes a great sound;
When Ramnath sinks in it, it makes a bigger sound. (Pulse
and rice)

(42)

A tiny thing when it is opened, is red. (A kind of pulse)

(43)

An earthen horse and an iron rein and the rider is *ghulghuli*
Padhan. (Bread)

(44)

Seven birds of seven colours enter into a pot,
And assume one colour. (Curry)

(45)

The seed is grown in the fields of *Sigati*,
It comes up without sprouting. (Curd)

(46)

The cow is tied to a hill and its calf is in Hardwar.
No human being can milk it, it has to cross the ocean.
(*Liquor*)

(47)

A ghost is in your house. (Kitchen)

(48)

All disappeared except the one who had lost his nose. (Hearth)

(49)

A tree only one foot tall, with hardly any trunk has
a funny name. (A hubble-bubble)

(50)

A pond at the bottom, and a cup on the pillar.
A thing in the cup, and a jewel in the thing.
(A hubble-bubble)

(51)

In the fire of heaven a castle is built with opening in
water.
Whenever you play on the flute a black snake comes
out. (A hubble-bubble)

(52)

Every where there is a light except under the candle
stand. (An earthen lamp)

(53)

The goat grazes on the bank of a river.
And dies when the river dries up. (An earthen lamp)

(54)

Clip it and still it walks. (Sheep)

(55)

The elder and younger brothers are sitting on a golden cot ;
yet neither of them can touch each other.

(The horns of a bullock)

(56)

Its back is rocky but stomach is as soft as cotton.
Its eyes resemble with stars and it has a hole like a well.

(A tortoise)

(57)

Cut and decorated in the forest.
Remained in water for twelve years without moulding.

(A Boat)

(58)

It blackens the heal, it has teeth at the back of its mouth.
When you solve my riddle, O husband ! you may go.

(A shoe)

(59)

It walks here and there but as soon as it sees water jumps
into the lap.

(A shoe)

(60)

You have a hole, but I have none.
If I place something into it, it is safe.

(A shoe)

(61)

There is a white cover on a black article.

(A cap)

(62)

It is neither a seer nor quarter of a seer in weight,
Yet you have to lift it with both hands.

(A cap)

(63)

The cattle-shed has two rooms and two bullocks are inside it.
When four ropes are tied they cannot move.

(A bodice)

(64)

You squat down to display it.
When I force on you you, will give me something then.
(Bangles)

(65)

A dazzling well.
Solve this riddle, or else I abuse you. (A mirror)

(66)

It shakes itself and causes me to shake as well. (A fan)

(67)

Something hops to the farthest end of the forest.
(A needle and thread)

(68)

Stones and rocks may be split, but this thing never breaks.
(A shadow)

(69)

It is neither a ball of gold nor a silver rupee.
It has a well inside without an opening at the top.
(An egg)

(70)

A small pond with five canals. (A paw)

(71)

Some one is so brave that he takes off his skin and leaves
it on the ground. (A Serpent)

(72)

Its stomach is all hollow and its tail is pregnant.
(A fishing net).

(73)

Let it all go, only hold the end. (A rope for drawing water
from a well)

(74)

An old woman with her back bent has got wooden lins.
(A sickle)

(75)

The children are born first and then the parents. (A string bag)

(76)

I have been to the east, I have been to the west and even
to Gujarat.

I have seen only one city where a grain is found without a
chaff. (Salt)

(77)

A beautiful girl comes out of her house in a shining manner;
she lives in her house in a grand style and behaves ill
mannerly outside. (A sword)

(78)

A beautiful girl comes out of her house in a charming
manner.

She puts her nose-ring on her head and sharp edge on her
face. (A sword)

(79)

The black bull is grazing grass.

When bellows fire in the forest, its sound travels six miles.
(A gun)

(80)

Move out! O earth! For we dance.

(Moon)

(81)

An earthen pot full of *rhye*, father and son cannot count
them. (Stars)

(82)

The little turmeric thundered in the forest and reached the sea.
(Thunder and lightning)

(83)

Here is a riddle for you, my son,
A bird without feathers flew away with a thread round its
throat. (A kite)

(84)

One man has two wives. (Wheels of a cart)

(85)

Eight kinds of wood were used to make the box and new
sandal wood to make the shafts.
The two young bulls are pulling it as if they are two peacocks.
(A bullock-cart)

(86)

Green vans, yellow vans, all the vans are moving,
Who rings the small bells?
The mother earth is asleep. Who dare to disturb her sleep.
(A Railway Train)

(87)

There is some one who urinates through out the night.
(Water of tube-well)

(88)

Figure it has, but no wings.
It goes about, yet eats nothing. (A rupee)

(89)

It has five husbands but it is not Dropadi;
It has two tongues but it is not a snake;
It has a black face, but not that of a cat. (A pen)

(90)

Its body is black, its face is slightly black, they live in a sea.
Both go to war and two soldiers are in one boat.
(Ink, pen and paper)

(91)

In a white field, the black seeds are scattered and sown.
(Ink, pen and paper)

On an analysis of the games and riddles it can be definitely stated that the changes in the amusements of the Tharus are easily traceable. The games like *chilgari* seem to be of recent development, while frequent reference to water of tube well, gun, kite, rupce and train is a clear evidence of borrowing of alien words and their assimilation in their riddles. With the growth of education, they have also begun to compose riddles describing in their simple form, things like paper, pen and ink.

On a closer study of the folk literature of the Tharus it is found that quite a large number of Hindi words have been introduced and adopted in folk-songs, riddles and daily conversation. It is not unlikely that closer inter-course with the Hindus may ultimately lead to the ousting of the original dialect of the Tharus, *Tharuhati*. The substitution of the tribal dialects and languages by the languages of the highly civilized people is a common occurrence in India and elsewhere.

XVI

PROBLEMS OF CULTURE CONTACT AND CULTURE DYNAMICS

A detailed ethnographic account of the important aspects of Tharu culture has been presented in the context of culture contact and culture dynamics in the preceding chapters. But the problem for any study of culture dynamics is not merely the examination of the interrelations between the various elements of culture, or institutions important as it is, but also to analyse the nature and significance of the dynamic elements in the culture which at once accounts for the vitality and adaptability of its own. Tharu culture, as has been made clear, has had a peculiar kind of tenacity and vitality not common among tribes outside India, even in India their peers are not many. It will, therefore, be useful in this concluding chapter to focus upon the problems of contact, although it has been indicated 'et passim' throughout this book and to examine the nature of contact situation, the reasons of adoption of new cultural elements and the ways in which they have been integrated into the existing cultural pattern of the Tharus and to assess how far they have been able to adopt and assimilate the traits of alien cultures and to what extent contacts have benefitted them and have added to their material prosperity and how far they have created new discomforts in their cultural matrix. Many problems have arisen out of their contacts with other communities specially the Hindus, for the simple reason that the juxtaposition of two cultures, lower and higher, creates its own problems requiring special techniques for their solution. Even a casual perusal of the foregoing chapters would make it clear

that no culture change is possible without bringing some dislocation in the existing culture pattern of the Tharus. But simply because of this it can not be said that all such changes are for worse and therefore to be deplored and discouraged. This, of course, does not mean that all changes arising out of contacts are for good and therefore to be extolled and encouraged. It is precisely here that there is a job for the applied anthropologist to do. He has to sift his material carefully and analyse it to see what dislocations are merely temporary and are just the by-products of a bigger and, on the whole, beneficial change that might be coming over the culture; or again, what dislocations have a tendency towards becoming a long term and hence, a permanent mal-adjustment.

Contact Situation¹

Living in the malarious and inhospitable region of the Tarai, the Tharus have enjoyed as well as suffered from a relatively secluded life. Some of the most important factors and processes for a slow rate of contact may be analysed.

1. The habitat of the Tharus is comparatively inaccessible by the nature of its location on the one hand, and due to malarious climate on the other. These two factors are responsible for repelling many immigrants who might like to exploit the rich and fertile lands of the Tarai

2. The Tharus, especially their women are believed to be notorious for their sorcery and witchcraft. Even upto this day people of the plains associate '*Tharuhat*', the Tharu country, with the land of witchcraft where women are said to transform men into animals and birds and thus captivate them if they happen to have their fancy on them. Even the author's parents were not completely devoid of such fears and anxiety till he came back from his first field trip and still remained a human being. Fear and suspicion of this kind have certainly deterred the people from coming into contact with the Tharus,

¹ Refer to author's article 'Directed Cultural Change Among the Tharus', Agra University Journal of Research (Letters), Vol. IV, 1956, pp. 55-58.

though to some extent these feelings and attitudes are changing considerably with ever increasing rate of contact.

3. Complete absence of mines and minerals in this region has been a great obstacle in developing sustained contacts with many workers of different areas, as one finds in Chhota Nagpur in Behar which has drawn in the indigenous tribal population as well as people from other parts of the country in search of jobs. This has facilitated contacts.

4. With no problem of greater pressure of population on land as one encounters in other parts of the country, the Tharus are not forced to seek employment as plantation workers or other kinds of factory labourers. Only some of them having the advantage of primary and secondary education are seeking jobs in different State departments but even they have not wholly lost their roots in their indigenous source of livelihood, i.e. agriculture.

5. Unlike other tribes in India, the Tharus have not come under the influence of any Christian Mission. There is no evidence of any conversion having ever taken place. Thus the Tharus have escaped the notice of one of the most powerful acculturative agencies.

6. Another striking fact is that the Tharus have not been affected by the impact of war economy which has either shattered or benefitted the tribal life. A glaring example is that of Chhota Nagpur tribes of Behar. There are no military camps in the vicinity of the Tarai, nor has there been any recruitment of Tharu personnel. Another factor in this connection has been their aversion and hostility to and fear of any military recruitment or training.

In spite of the comparative seclusion in which the Tharus have lived in the past due to their peculiar contact situation, they have not escaped infiltration from outside and have developed contacts with heterogeneous peoples of varying cultural levels. On an analysis of the factors and agencies of culture contact, the following seem to bear out :—

1. The Tarai being situated between the Himalayas on the north and the Gangetic plains on the south brings the Tharus in constant touch with the people inhabiting the neighbouring hills, particularly, Nepalese and Kumaonese and



Plate No. 26. Contacts are growing through markets.



Plate No. 27. We are tempted to purchase foreign goods.

also the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs of the plains. Of all these people the Nepalese from the hills and the Hindus from the plains visiting the Tharus in different roles of traders, merchants, contractors and administrative officials have exerted their influence considerably.

2. The earliest contact the Tharus developed was probably through occasional visits of traders and merchants both from the adjoining hills and the plains, who used to visit them at the end of each harvesting season. Though these contacts were of periodical nature, they had their effect in changing the isolationist attitude of the Tharus who began to realise how backward and primitive they were. Crooke, Turner and Majumdar have also referred to these agencies and agents of contact in their writings.

3. The administrative officers, the personnel of the Public Health and Irrigation Departments, forest officials, contractors and their agents and the police with whom the Tharus have developed some contact and have also entered into some sort of inter-personal relationship have certainly been responsible for influencing the attitude of the Tharus. Then again, at various places in the Tarai, the Tharus themselves are employed as teachers, clerks, forest guards and so on. In this manner they come in contact with their colleagues of other communities and try to identify themselves with them, particularly with the high caste Hindus.

4. The influence of commercial contacts through bi-weekly markets and fairs that are held in the Tarai is considerably felt among the Tharus, as it tends to facilitate the transmission of new ideas along with the import of new goods and articles.

5. A keen desire for education among the Tharus and greater spread of education in their region through the efforts of local administration have also brought the Tharus in recent years into close contact with other castes. After receiving education in some of the neighbouring towns the Tharus return to their villages with newer and fresher ideas. It is these educated Tharus who are most vulnerable to change and may even turn out to be real reformers or innovators. The medium of instruction being Hindi helps them to acquire knowledge and understanding of the Hindu culture and makes

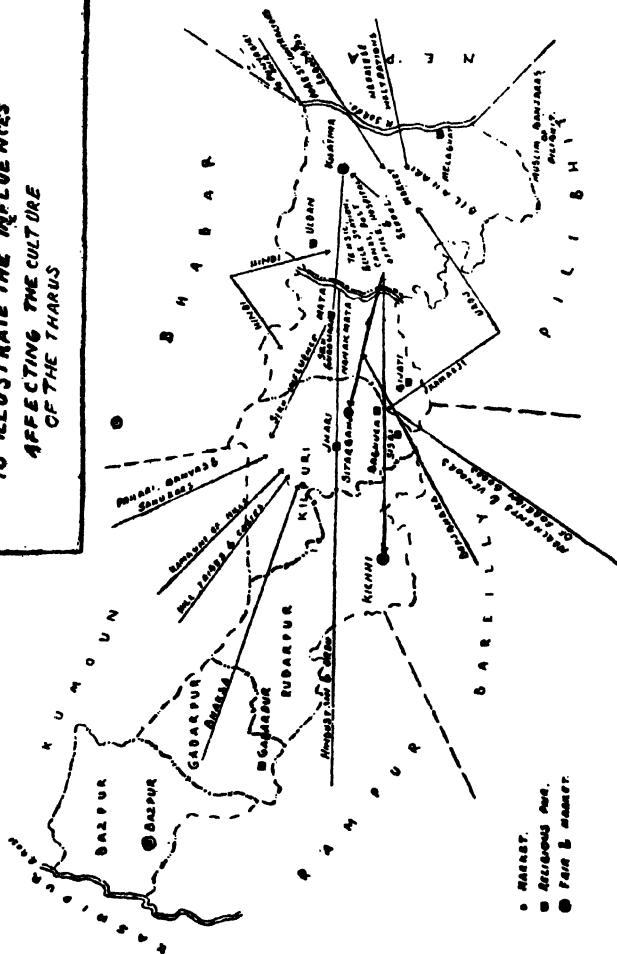
them realise their backwardness and primitive ways of living.

6. A very recent impact of materially superior cultures on the Tharus began when their main habitat of the Tarai was opened with roads for the sake of forest exploitation. This process has brought the Tharus into sustained and extensive contact with the outsiders, who work on the Tarai forests as labourers and contractors.

7. From the above description of different agencies and agents of culture contact it may be inferred that the Tharus speak a language which draws from the stocks of Hindi, and its other forms namely, Kanauji and Brajbhasha, Kumaonese and Urdu. It is certainly an evidence of their contact with the people who speak these languages and dialects. In a brief discussion in the classical work on Linguistic Survey of India, Grierson¹ has not even recognised a separate language of the Tharus, who, according to him, 'do not have a language of their own and speak more or less correctly the language of Aryan races with whom they are in immediate contact. For instance, the Tharus of the north of Purnea appear to speak a corrupt form of the Eastern Maithili spoken in that district; those of Champaran, a corrupt Bhojpuri and those of Naini Tal Tarai, the ordinary Western Hindi of the locality.' I do not know how far Grierson's statement can be tested on the basis of philological evidence and linguistic examination, but the language of the Tharus of Naini Tal Tarai, which is indigenously known as *Tharuhati* is certainly a mixed one, though it may not completely be identified with Western Hindi and also it may be recognised as a separate dialect. What is most valuable from the point of view of acculturation is that a mutually comprehensible language is one of the most effective agencies for not only developing contact between two groups or more but also for facilitating a smooth and convenient tool of communication between them. This is what happened in the case of the Tharus, when they came in contact with various castes and tribes speaking different languages and dialects. The Tharus in turn have been assi-

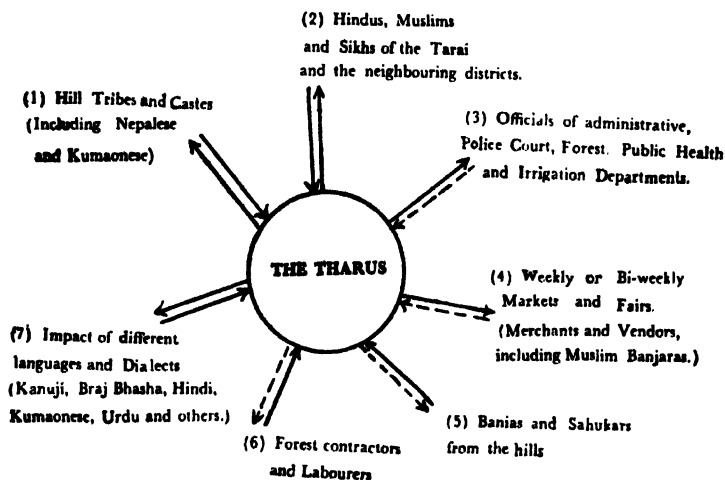
1. Grierson, G.A., Linguistic Survey of India, Vol. V, Part II, p. 311.

MAP OF TARAISTATE
TO ILLUSTRATE THE INFLUENCES
AFFECTING THE CULTURE
OF THE THARUS



milating new words which may lead to the formation of new ideas and value systems. Thus, language has been a great factor in bringing the Tharus in closer contact with different communities, but the Hindus have been outstandingly influential, and in the long run, the Tharus may be absorbed as one of the Hindu communities belonging to Kshatriya order. There is another possibility that they may also develop a language which may be very much akin to modern Hindi. A process of this sort has already set in within recent years with greater increase in education and contacts with the Hindus.

The following diagram clearly shows the different agencies with which the Tharus have been developing occasional as well as permanent contacts for the last so many decades. The directions of such contacts have been illustrated on the map facing page no. 287



Note:—(Since the contact is a two-way process, thick lines show sustained and permanent contacts; while dotted lines illustrate casual and temporary contacts between the Tharus and other agencies. The arrows denote the directions of contact.)

Evidences of Culture Change

As a result of these contacts changes are perceptible both in material and non-material aspects of Tharu life. A detailed description has been given in the preceding chapters of this book. Here we shall summarise the evidences of culture change.

Agriculture, being their main source of livelihood, the Tharus are naturally keen on improving their agricultural implements and techniques. Thus steel tools and iron implements are certainly the first items to be borrowed from people with a better technique. This involves repairing and further purchases so that these implements by themselves provide sufficient cause for sustained contacts. By and by, as improved techniques in agriculture have borne fruit in the shape of increased yield, the marketing of agricultural produce gradually have become a component in their economy. The need for exchange having asserted itself and this is the door through which gradually money economy has been making increasing inroads into Tharu life with its inevitable concomitant of modification of community life. Written bonds and contracts have recently become quite a common feature. The Cooperative Bank of Khatima is but one of the culminating points in this development of money economy.

The introduction of gun has made their chase easier. This has also led to the increase in demand for guns on the part of the well-to-do Tharus. This itself introduced a number of important changes, for instance, purchase of guns with its steady demand for ammunition etc. again underlines the requirements of more and more money which again can be obtained by exchange alone. Moreover, the introduction of gun brings about significant changes in the organisation of hunting expeditions.

The overall effect of a whole concatenation of changes, with a more secure and steady source of livelihood is that an incentive to improve their standard of living alien to them has developed specially among the educated people of their community. New wants, such as, European dresses hurricane lanterns, bicycles and cosmetics have appeared in their daily life and they are just tending to be necessities with the educated and advanced people. Money is required to buy these things and the way of living must also be changed to earn it. Herein lies one of the greatest of many changes with the attendant change in values—the transition from moneyless economy to a money dominated one.

Due to the invasion of money economy, the assertion of individual authority and responsibility has been more pronounced in recent years. Consequently, joint family is increasingly yielding place to the single family. An increasing number of people now prefer to cultivate their land independently, sell their own produce, spend their income on themselves, their wives and children and live as separate family units. On the other hand, the village community with its cooperative pattern and strongly knit discipline based on mutual reciprocity of obligations serves to keep alive in the mind of every Tharu a feeling of tribal unity, cohesion and solidarity.

The pride in claiming a higher social status for themselves as Rana Thakurs or Thakurs simply, wearing of the sacred thread and conforming to the precepts of Hinduism in some form or the other are all indicative of the change that is coming over the Tharus. Thus Hindu faith and its tradition have so far made inroads in the lives and culture of the Tharus to inspire in them social and religious movements like *Jati Sudhar*.

The kinship terminology, rules of exogamy and endogamy have changed a little. Besides the traditional kinship, the Tharus have devised an artificial bond of friendship and have extended it to the members of high caste Hindus by breaking down the rigid barriers of tribal exclusiveness.

Although the Tharus do not believe in the alleged anti-social activity of their women, the latter still wield a powerful influence over their menfolk and have maintained their position in spite of the restrictions imposed on their free movements, particularly in the markets and fairs.

The Tharus unlike most of the Hindus and tribes in India do not regard menstrual blood with horror. Even then, the conception of social impurity, which forms the basis of innumerable observances and taboos among the Hindus and other castes, has gone deep into the consciousness of the Tharus. The menstrual and pregnancy taboos which were almost unknown to them are now being practised by them.

Marriage by capture has been abandoned possibly due to the increasing respect for institutionalizing marriage after the Hindu pattern. The present marriage rituals of the Tharus can, however, be unhesitatingly attributed to Hindu influence. But unlike the high caste Hindus they are still practising *gharbailtha*, junior levirate and sororate, *urari*, *dola* and polygyny which are regarded as tribal practices.

The funeral rites specially their most elaborate aspects accompanying and following cremation and burial are undoubtedly modelled in accordance with the Hindu customs. They have tried to imitate the custom of cleansing the mourners, particularly the blood relatives after the funeral rites. The notion of death pollution and its consequent disabilities on the part of the bereaved family up to a specified period have also been taken over from the Hindus.

Similarly, many Hindu religious practices have been gradually integrated into the religious order of the Tharus. Such requisites as incense, clove, *ghee* and *hom* are now frequently used by them side by side with still widespread custom of animal sacrifice. They also worship Muslim saints and pay their offerings at the Sikh Gurudwara at Nanakmata. As we have had occasion to remark earlier the dividing line between Hindu pantheism and Tharu animism is thin indeed and, therefore, adoption of the higher Hindu gods and goddesses into the Tharu religion with its corresponding change in the attitude of the people

has taken place almost imperceptibly. We have also seen that there is the suggestion of some kind of a correspondence between the emergence of graded society due to the impact of the Hindus and the hierarchy of supernatural powers, gods and goddesses.

Magical practices are applied to agriculture, diseases and other crises relating to birth and marriage ceremonies. Magical methods are also employed in driving away the evil spirits, in warding off the influence of 'evil eye' and in curing diseases caused by mother goddess and other supernatural agencies. The educated people among the Tharus have begun to consult the doctors in cases of ailments and external diseases. But the majority still have faith in their *Bhararas* whose magical spells and amulets are believed to be most effective in any crisis or difficulty of the Tharus.

With the growth of new consciousness the Tharus have reacted violently, which has led to an increase in crimes in recent years. Revenge and jealousy are responsible for crimes of less violent nature, such as, cutting of one's throat, stealing and burning of another man's house. But, on the whole, the Tharus have preserved their old virtues, such as, honesty, simplicity and hospitality.

The aesthetic taste of the Tharus is very well expressed in their music, songs and folk-dancing. Growing contacts and education among them have brought forth an apathy towards their own tribal songs and music and have replaced them by cheap cinema songs and prostitute's dances. But broadly speaking, Hindu contacts have enriched the themes and content of their folk-songs by adding to them mythological stories and religious anecdotes from the great epics of Mahabharat and Ramayan.

Tharu boys and girls amuse themselves by playing a variety of games, such as, *Gargar*, *Duduwa*, *Rug Rug Baler*, *Ektangari*, *Labbasahi*, *Chara*, *Atakan Chatakan*, *Hanna*, *Jhinjhi*, *Chilgari*. *Duduwa* and *Labbasahi* have been borrowed from their neighbours, while games like *Chilgari* are of recent origin. Frequent references to gun, kite, rupee, train, paper, pen and ink in their riddles are clear indications of borrowing of alien words. Thus quite a large number of Hindi, Urdu,

Brajbhasha and Kumaonese words have been assimilated in their *mantras*, folk-songs, riddles and daily conversation. This process may lead, in the long run, to the ousting of the tribal dialect of the Tharus, *Tharuhati*.

It is, therefore, evident that contacts of the Tharus with the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs have brought about a fundamental change in their material, economic, social and religious spheres of life. To a casual observer the culture change, which has come over them, may seem to be almost complete, but a closer study reveals that the Tharus have always been remarkably selective in adoption of alien customs and traits. The Tharus have selected or assimilated with suitable adaptations and modifications such elements of alien cultures that answered their needs and fitted to their patterns of life and rejected others that were incompatible with their own culture. Thus they have retained their self-sufficient economy in some form or the other, mutual reciprocity of obligations, the structure of village community, some of the old traditions and forms connected with birth, marriage, and death—specially with religion. At the same time, they have absorbed a large number of elements of more civilised people in their own culture.

Benefits and Discomforts

There are divergent opinions among anthropologists, social reformers and administrative officials with regard to the benefits and discomforts which the tribal people experience when they come in contact with more civilized people. The processes of culture change that precipitate the decline of primitive people have received increasing attention everywhere. In India, the danger of such contacts has been recognised, and anthropologists, such as, J. H. Hutton, S. C. Roy, J. P. Mills, W. V. Grigson, Verrier Elwin, Christoph von Furer-Haimendorf and D. N. Majumdar have repeatedly urged the necessity of protecting the tribal people against the onslaught of civilization.

In moving words Elwin expresses the havoc created by contacts on the Baigas. "The life has gone from many

villages. Child marriages have started, untouchables are despised, in some villages the women have lost much of their freedom.....Some of their simple and innocent dances, under Hindu influence have been given up. The souls of the people are soiled and grimy with the dust of passing motor buses. In the village, you are in the midst not of a living community, but a collection of isolated units. Tribal tradition appears slightly ludicrous, even to the tribesmen themselves. And once that point is reached, there is no hope for the tribe. It is not too late to save most of the Baiga from the physical apathy and physical decline that otherwise awaits them,"¹ Dr. J. H. Hutton also strikes a note of warning with greater objectivity in the Census Report, 1931. 'The semi-civilised aboriginals,' he writes, 'may retain a sort of emasculated tribal life, deprived of the customs and festivals that gave it meaning and cohesion, and fall into that physical apathy and physical decline which has decimated so many tribal communities in the Pacific and elsewhere; and this decline is accelerated in another way by the opening up of communications'. Writing about the Birhors and the Korwas of Chhota Nagpur, S. C. Roy points out that 'with the opening up of the country by roads and railways under the British Rule and the gradual deforestation of the country and ever-increasing restrictions on the use of the forest, these forest tribes (Birhors and Korwas) are slowly but surely dying out partly from famine and partly from loss of interest in life'.² But at the same time he is not blind to the beneficial effects of contact. Balancing his views he states that "on the whole the results of the contact with Christianity are rather beneficial; and expects the people of Chhota Nagpur ultimately to adopt and practise three great principles of Hinduism, viz., true knowledge, true devotion and right action".³ Writing about the evil effects of a narrow Christian Missionary policy on the Nagas in an article in

1. Verrier Elwin, 'The Baiga', pp. 515-516.

2. 'Journal of Bihar and Orissa Research Society', 1931, pp. 375-382.

3. Ibid.

1931 Census Report, J. P. Mills says, "the suppression of the wearing of all ornaments or tribal finery, of dancing, of singing (except hymns), of village feasts and of all artistic outlet is spreading an unspeakable drabness over village life.....Told year in and year out that all the past history, all the strivings, all the old customs of his tribe are wholly evil; the Naga tends to despise his own race and no right of the soul is blacker than that". Grigson¹ also supports this view point and describes 'how many Maria almost as in obedience to some decree abandoned the rib-dress, shield and gaily-coloured head-dress and skirt that had made their dances a delight to watch.'

From the above remarks of different writers we note that most of them agree that the tribal people have lost 'joie de vivre' and have developed 'physical apathy and decline' as a result of their contact with people of higher civilization. So far, no such grave consequences of culture contact have been faced by the Tharus. They have not lost interest in their life and have not suffered from 'physical apathy and decline', although they could not totally escape such discomforts which are the natural outcome in the course of any people's contact with others.

(a) Discomforts

1. The restrictions imposed by the Government on the traditional occupations of the Tharus, such as, hunting, collection of forest products and building material have proved a serious blow to the economic self-sufficiency of these people. Consequently, resentment is growing among the Tharus against the denial of their age-old liberties. The relations between the Tharus and the forest officials are worsening every day.

2. The effects of indirect rule on the Tharus who are governed by the legal code of the country and not by the customary law are not beneficial for the ignorant Tharus. Although they still look forward to their own tribal *Panchayat* for administering law and justice to them, yet the doors of

1. Grigson, 'The Maria Gonds of Bastar', p. 76.

the civil courts are open to them. The judicial officials not being conversant with the customs and practices of these people have not been able to impart satisfactory justice to them.¹

3. The excise laws make it illegal to brew rice or *mahuwa* beer or any kind of spirituous drink. Instead the excise authorities allow the sale of liquor by rapacious merchants at the licensed shops for money price. This situation instead of diminishing the drink habits of the Tharus has led to an increase in drunkenness and immorality. Most of the Tharus are addicted to drink, even their womenfolk drink and create a taste for it among their children. Among most of them, liquor is a necessary accompaniment of almost all social and religious functions which require fulfilment of tribal obligations regarding hospitality and entertainment. The common practice with the liquor sellers who are outsiders mostly is to exploit the innocence and simplicity of the Tharus by selling liquor to them on credit and then to charge exorbitant rate of interest which goes on accumulating to enormous amounts in course of a few years. Many a Tharu have been totally ruined on account of drinking habit and exploitation of these liquor sellers.

4. The indigenous pharmacopaea and magical rites of the Tharus evolved by a long process of trial and error were fairly efficacious against most of their diseases. But contacts with outsiders have introduced new diseases among the Tharus who do not possess any efficient and indigenous pharmacopaea for their cure. The diseases like gonorrhoea and syphilis and other contact diseases are imported. No natural immunity exists for these nor have any facilities of modern antidotes been extended to these areas. The result is an increase in mortality in recent years.

1. The effects of indirect rule on the general welfare of the people are far from encouraging. Commenting on the drawbacks of the indirect rule elsewhere, D. N. Majumdar observes, 'The system of Indirect Rule, as is prevalent in Kolhan, has many drawbacks, which have encouraged among the Hos certain evils'. (D. N. Majumdar, 'A Tribe in Transition', p. 14.)

5. The vendors of foreign merchandise with better knowledge of business transactions cheat the simple Tharus by selling cheaper goods at higher prices. Moreover, the Tharus who have crude weights and measures, and are not well-versed with current rates lose a great deal in every business transaction with the petty shop keepers and vendors. These kinds of raw deals specially at the fairs and markets which have begun to attract these people are ruining them financially.

6. The unregulated and ill-planned reform movements with their insistence upon the abandonment of old customs and practices, rites and rituals under the pressure of the Hindu contact have brought to the Tharus many discomforts, for example :

(a) By inviting Brahmins in various ceremonies at birth, marriage and death, the Tharus have to incur a lot of expenditure.

(b) Fowl forms a very important item in the religious sacrifices and magical rituals of the Tharus. By prohibiting fowl-rearing they have to purchase fowls from the Muslims who sell them at a very high price. Thus, this reform has hit the Tharus very hard.

(c) The restrictions on the freedom of their womenfolk have created an agitation among women themselves who have defied at times such a ban on their age-old liberty. This situation has created a lot of trouble in the Tharu community, as men do not have much control over their women. The result has been that happiness of family life has been broken down in many a case and bickerings have increased.

(d) Contact has also brought less desirable customs of the Hindus caste system such as dietary restrictions and taboos.

7. The system of education, which aims at developing the kind of skill that will be useful to the Government, or any employer for that matter, for employment of clerks, patwaris and peons, has thus far neglected such arts and crafts as could have helped the Tharus in improving their standard of living. On the other hand, it makes educated Tharus aspire for higher place in the social scale. They begin to feel

superior to their illiterate brethren, while they themselves bring an anarchism in their social life. Thus they become detribalised. Their superficial appreciation of higher cultures is pathetic indeed. They respect it only for the sake of obtaining a job in some town. If they fail to get one, they are no better equipped for life in their villages than if they have never been to school at all. Torn from their tribal moorings even when they succeed in getting a job, they soon relapse into drinking and other vices.

8. *Begar*, the forced and compulsory labour without any compensatory payment, has been a great curse for the Tharus ever since they were brought under modern system of administration. Government officials looking after the administration of the Tarai force the Tharus to collect their fuel, to supply them vegetables, milk and *ghee* and other facilities for transport when they tour from village to village. Dishonesty and tyranny of lower staff of the Estate make the compulsory labour even a worse evil. This *begar*¹ is not a unique feature of this place alone; it is a curse of the tribal India as a whole, to which such authorities as Hutton and Grigson have testified.

(b) **Benefits from Contact**

Though contacts with different people have brought to the Tharus a number of discomforts, they could live their life and what is more, they have survived the onslaught of culture contact. In fact, the Tharus seem to have gained in a number of ways by acculturating to higher civilization.

1. In the economic sphere, contact of the Tharus with more civilized people is fraught with three definite advantages :—

1. The Hon. J. W. Best, late of Indian Forest Service, has strongly condemned *begar* among the Baiga of the Lormi range. "Each police man, tahsildar, revenue inspector, and anyone else with power to twist the wretched villager's tails, made his demands on the village. He demanded guides and transport to the next camping ground for himself and his servants, the collection of firewood, the cutting of grass, the carrying of water, the supply of *ghee*...the greater (of which) is not paid for...The very men whose business it is to check these abuses themselves benefit from them"...(J. W. Best, 'Forest Life in India', 1935, p. 134).

(i) Contact has familiarized the Tharus with general types of foreign goods and technical processes and has given them altogether a new perspective. With the adoption of steel tools and agricultural implements of their neighbours they have improved their crude agricultural methods.

(ii) Contact has helped to furnish the Tharus with new schemes of economic values, and to arouse in them new desires and ambitions. An incentive to improve their standard of living has also developed and this means greater industry, greater credit and greater agricultural improvement.

(iii) Contact has made the Tharus acquainted with a different economic standard. It has put before them individualistic outlook and a scheme of trade and exchange based on money and regulated by totally different principles from those obtaining in their society earlier.

2. In their routine life education consisted in stereotypes of story telling, the routine imitation and instruction in their traditional economic activities. But now contact itself has become a rich source of introducing improvements in their modes of economic activities, such as, we witness in the improvements of their weapons and agricultural implements. The opening of primary schools has brought new and sure technique of imparting instruction and education.

3. They have improved their social status by calling themselves Rajputs in the hierarchy of caste system. They have begun to observe rules of personal hygiene, such as, daily bath and use of clean water etc. . Some have made conscious efforts at uprooting such social evils as excessive drinking and extravagance. Their religious beliefs have come to include some conception of a Supreme God. Even O' Malley, an arch critic of contact and assimilation, has reached the same conclusion about the advantages of adoption of Hinduism. "It is the first step to a sober life, for Hinduism discourages immoderate indulgence in liquor and it involves the recognition of the standards of a civilized morality."¹

4. Absence of any armed uprising like those of the Mundas and Kol Mohinuj indicates the fact that discomforts

1. O'Malley, "Modern India and the West", p. 736.

due to contact perhaps never went beyond the limit of toleration. That is to say the oppressive inroads were never on a very large scale. It may also be due to their greater capacity for adaptation to new contacts, because their culture has been fairly elastic to absorb, adopt and acculturate to many beliefs, customs and practices of the Hindus and other people.

After a review of the whole situation of the discomforts and benefits derived by the Tharus from contact with people of higher civilization, we find that contact is undoubtedly a mixed blessing. If the Tharus have suffered at the hands of Government officers, itinerant vendors and merchants of foreign merchandise, contractors and creditors; if they have been affected by newly imported diseases and finally if they are facing the problem of fragmentation of their holdings because of the break-up of joint family, they have also gained by improving their methods of farming, making permanent dwellings, by introducing better ways of living and broader outlook on life. In short, in spite of some discomforts, a basis for their development has been laid down by various invincible factors and forces that are working among them for their social, religious and cultural advancement.

Problems of Culture Contact

If the Tharus have derived some benefits from their contact with the Hindus and other people of higher civilization, it does not mean that they have no problems to face today. Drink, illiteracy and debt are at work to handicap their progress. The number of landless labourers is increasing and the fragmentation of holding has taken place. If problems like these are not studied and beneficial schemes are not put into action early, they will become a drag on Tharu society.

1. It is in the sphere of economic contact that the gravest problems arise, for here the aim of the trader, merchant and the contractor is absolutely irreconcilable with the aspirations of the Tharus. Money economy brings new problems. The

traders better equipped with the complications of money economy exploit the simplicity and ignorance of the Tharus to their own advantage. They gain in every transaction because of the Tharu's crude weights and measures, and calculations.

2. Another specific problem of the Tharus is their habit of inordinate drinking which has been further aggravated by the favourable excise policy of the Government. We have already seen that a major part of their income is spent on the ceremonial offering of liquor in propitiation of the spirits and for entertainment of guests. The liquor sellers knowing the habits of the Tharus fully well, sell the liquor on credit and charge from them prohibitive rate of interest and thus keep them for ever in their grip of debt which a man cannot pay up in his life time and leaves a legacy of this debt to his generations.

3. Introduction of forest conservancy has meant very severe curtailment of such customary rights on which the agricultural prosperity of the Tharus depends. Many of them have made serious complaints that they are not freely allowed to cut bamboos and beams for their thatches, *khair* for making *kilwai*; and what is more, they do not conveniently get these things even if they are ready to pay the price. Furthermore, the restrictions on their occasional or seasonal hunting have created another problem for them because they supplemented their food supply from their hunt.

4. The whole of the Tarai lacks proper facilities of transport and communications. Consequently, it becomes inaccessible in most parts of the year, specially during and after the rains when it is very difficult even for the country carts to negotiate. Trade and commerce have suffered terribly on account of the lack of facilities of transport. Consequently, the Tharus are at the mercy of the visiting *Banjaras* and *Banias* for their trade requirements.

5. The indirect administrative system has failed to take note of many urgent needs of the Tharus. Possessing no expert knowledge of the customs and practices and even of the dialect of these people officers have failed to administer

proper justice to them. On the other hand, many unscrupulous officials have exploited them to their own benefit and have extorted *begar* or compulsory labour from them.

6. Another practice rampant in some villages is debt-bondage or bonded service, known as *bonda*, whereby a man on receiving advance in cash or kind engages himself by a verbal or a written agreement or bond, to be a labourer of his creditors for agricultural and domestic purposes as long as the loan together with its interest remains unpaid. The Tharus when forced by circumstances accept such a bonded labour.¹

7. Ill-health and illiteracy are some of the major problems facing the Tharus today. In spite of their adaptability to the inhospitable climate of this region, epidemics like cholera and small-pox have taken a heavy toll of human lives more than once during recent years. Since the hospitals are ill-equipped and understaffed, the Tharus do not get proper facilities for their treatment.

There are comparatively few schools to provide education to children. There is no higher secondary school in this region. The boys who have the will and means to pursue their education have to go either to Haldwani or Pilibhit for their education, the expenses of which only a few Tharus can afford to meet. The remarks of D. N. Majumdar are true to the core in case of the Tharus. "Schools exist but they do not function. Teachers and parents are often found to conspire to defeat the purpose of education, by allowing the students full liberty to engage in domestic rural economy of the village and schools overflow with students when inspectors come to visit such institutions only to disperse on departure of the visiting staff. The teachers get their paltry remuneration from the State coffers but their immediate needs

1. This problem of bonded labour is not only restricted to the tribal people alone. Agricultural labourers in parts of Bombay and Madras work under almost a similar system which Dr. Pillai characterises as 'a grestic serfdom'. (Dr. Pillai, 'Economic Conditions in India', p. 108).

are catered to by the villagers who are grateful to the former for such effective aid.”¹

The Future

Speaking about the Tharus we definitely reach this conclusion that culture change, whether through adoption, assimilation and acculturation, is inevitable, and therefore highly necessary and desirable. Fortunately, these processes of culture change have found a happy mingling among the Tharus with the result that their culture has undergone a metamorphosis. The policy of assimilation of foreign elements into the culture pattern of the Tharus does not aim at the total extinction of their indigenous institutions, for we cannot overlook and underrate many good and useful elements of their culture. Such a policy does admit of the possibility that some of the valuable traits of culture may be lost in the process of assimilation from a larger and more complex culture. It should not, however, lead us to the rash conclusion that the total gain in the long run will be very small as postulated by Elwin and others.

Thus before going for an overall contact and assimilation of Tharus we must distinguish between two broad factors:

- (i) which of the elements of their indigenous culture are going to be retained or preserved;
- (ii) which of the elements and institutions are to be destroyed or replaced by the elements of higher civilization.

The present study has tried to show that there are elements of their culture which in many respects are of considerable social and economic value to the Tharus. Reciprocity of mutual obligations and village community with its insistence on cooperation and mutual aid, the structure of their self-sufficient economy, for instance, must be retained in the best interest of the Tharus themselves. They may be modified and suited to their immediate needs rather than be supplanted wholly after our own cultural pattern. Malinowski is emphatic on the point. “The undermining of old established authority”,

1. D. N. Majumdar, ‘The Changing Canvas of Tribal Life’, *Eastern Anthropologist*, Vol. No. I (Tribal Number), p. 43.

remarks Malinowski, "of tribal morals and customs tends, on the one hand, completely to demoralize the natives and to make them unamenable to any law or rule; while on the other hand, by destroying the whole fabric of tribal life, it deprives them of many of their most cherished diversions, way of enjoying life and social pleasures."¹ Thus the doctrine of the mean is an ideal policy to be pursued with regard to Tharu problems. And the urgent need of pursuing a careful policy of this happy combination is nowhere more vividly exemplified than on the question of education. It will be agreed on all hands that no fundamental improvement can be brought in the life of the Tharus until right type of education is imparted to them. Parallel with the positions taken by various authorities on the question of segregation and acculturation, we find several views on the problem of tribal education. Elwin with his usually romantic approach to the tribal problem would like to see that only such education should be given to the tribal people as would conserve and develop aboriginal culture, religion and tribal institutions, would equip the people to defend themselves against bad influences of alien cultures and would improve their economic condition.² A more moderate view on the same lines is that of Grigson. "What the aboriginal really needs", he says, "is some knowledge of reading, writing and elementary mathematics of the ways of *sahukar*, the patwari and the shopkeeper and some means of supplementing his living."³ We differ fundamentally from this line of approach. We hold that once contact has been encouraged—the need for such encouragements we have already discussed in detail—further advancement is possible only by fuller assimilation of the kernel of higher culture—we refer to education. The only limiting factor that we shall stress is that all education that is brought from higher cultures must be suited to the local

1. B. Malinowski, 'Argonauts of the Western Pacific', p. 465.

2. Verrier Elwin, 'Loss of Nerves', p. 35.

3. Grigson, 'Notes on the Aboriginal Problem in the Mandla District', p. 42.

conditions. In one word, it is selective education that is needed. This raises problems of very intricate order. Higher education, say of the modern university type, may, indeed, bring in discomforts so long as a total integration of the educational system bearing on all aspects of their life is not introduced. In this scheme improvements of their agricultural improvements, a more scientific knowledge of their agricultural practices, utilization of forest resources, development of rural cooperatives, modern knowledge of health and hygiene—nothing should escape. The benevolent fear of many reformers that higher education might be too much for their cranial capacity has at its bottom the same old notion of inherent inferiority of the so-called lower races. This notion is no longer accepted by any scientist worth the name. Thus the question of withholding higher education from the Tharus on this score does not arise at all. On the contrary, our personal experience has been that some of them are as intelligent, if not more, as any others and what is more, they are eager to learn.

The most important problem of education, however, is the problem of language. In this matter there is hardly any room for controversy. The general discussion whether local dialect should be made the medium of instruction has no practical relevance, for *Tharuhali* the dialect of the Tharus, has already been Hinduized so to speak. Besides absorbing a good deal of Hindi vocabulary, the *Devnagri* script has already been adopted where there was no script at all. Thus it is desirable, nay it is imperative to teach them in Hindi, if they are to gain in the routine intercourse with the people of alien cultures.

The deciding factors in the successful carrying out of such a scheme of reforming any or all the aspects of Tharu life is the scientific knowledge, on the part of the planners of the working of the customs and institutions of the Tharus in their socio-cultural matrix. Change is inevitable but the process can be made smooth by proper understanding and scientific planning. We must realize that to a people their culture means something very vital to them and it cannot be thrown

away like worn-out clothes. Thus in any scheme for the rehabilitation of the Tharus, a proper assessment of their cultural development and cultural dynamics must be made. The present study of their culture dynamics may be of some practical and constructive help in this direction, because 'knowledge gives foresight,' and foresight is indispensable to the statesman and to the local administrator, to the educationalist, welfare worker and missionary alike. The discovery of long-run tendencies; the capacity of foreseeing and forecasting the future in the light of full knowledge of all the factors involved; competent advice on specific questions—these are the tasks of the contact-ethnographer as a practical expert.¹

1. B. Malinowski, 'The Dynamics of Culture Change', p. 162.

APPENDIX I

Village Census

I have recorded a house-to-house census of thirty three Tharu villages in both the tahsils of Khatima and Sitarganj. But a sample census of only one village is given here to economise space. In each house the names, sub-sections of the members of the family is given, followed by the corresponding data with regard to their wives, the names of all children living and dead. Mention has also been made about various types of houses built by the Tharus. The information relating to their marital conditions is also given. Names of persons managing their different families are given in italics. The deceased persons have been indicated by (D). The approximate age of unmarried boys and girls is given.

Since the Tharus sometimes migrate from one village to another, the population of their villages also fluctuates accordingly. The data of this census therefore reflects only the composition of the villages at one particular time.

Some important kinship connections of each person figuring in the census are indicated as far as possible, but no completeness can be claimed in this respect.

Tharu names like those of many other tribes sometimes have two alternative forms. In this census each individual's name by which he or she is generally addressed in his or her home is given.

All the thirty three villages are given in the sketch maps of the tahsils given in the chapter I.

Khetasanda Kham (Tahsil Khatima)

Khetasanda Kham is situated at the distance of four furlongs from the tahsil headquarter Khatima. It lies in a low

land and looks like an island during the rains. Another important thing with regard to its situation is that N.E. Rly. station of Khatima is touching the outskirts of this village. Therefore, it is frequently visited by the Government officials. The inhabitants of the village enjoy all the facilities provided by the Post and Tahsil offices etc., and a bi-weekly market at Khatima. There is no school in the village itself but close proximity of Primary and Final Vernacular schools at Khatima help the inhabitants to send their children to these schools.

The population of the village is a mixed one. The houses of Gosain and Rana Thakur Tharus are equal in number. Increasing education and contact with the inhabitants of Khatima are reflected in their Hinduized names.

House 1. *Prag Singh (Padhan)*, Rana Thakur-Kuri Batha.

(Khaparehal) Wife (i) Biranjan (Divorced, compensation Rs. 500)

Wife (ii) Gomati (Widow-remarriage, paid Rs. 400)

1st d. Sumitra (5 years)

1st s. Narendra (3 years)

Uncle : Phukal (Blind widower)

House 2. *Rangi Lal* (Rana Thakur) Kuri Batha

(Khaparehal) Wife : Mulls (Blind)

1st.s. Om Prakash (Married)

Wife : Rambati.

1st.d. Niba (Married)

2nd s. Pancham Singh (Married)

Wife : Bhikko

1st s. Rajendra (6 years)

1st d. Murti (4 years)

2nd d. Premwati (2½ years)

Younger brother : Shyam Lal (Patwari)

Wife (i) Mullo (D)

1st s. Alakh Singh

Wife : Dropadi

1st d. ... (D)

Wife (ii) Rewati.

1st d. Indrawati (7 years)

1st s. Paras Ram (4½ years)

Younger Cousin : Hari Singh.

Wife : Ramoli.

1st s. Sita Ram (4 years)

2nd s. Jai Ram (2 years)

House 3. *Vidya Ram* (Rana Thakur)

(Khaparehal) Wife :—Imarata.

1st s. ... (D)

1st d. ... (D)

2nd s. Phiru Ram (5 years)

House 4. *Jogi Das* (Rana Thakur)

(Khaparehal) Wife (i) :—Hansiya (D)

1st s. (D)

5 daughters (D)

6th d. Mullo (Married)

Wife (ii) :—Kali (Widow-remarriage, paid
Rs. 150)

1st d. Rukman (5 years)

1st s. (D)

2nd s. Chamman (D)

House 5. *Ram Bharose* (Rana Thakur)

Wife :—Mathura.

1st s. Nand Kishore (12 years)

2nd s. Roshan Lal (10 years)

3rd s. Narpatt (6 years)

4th s. Badam Singh (D)

1st d. Godawari (2 years)

House 6. *Bandhu Ram* (Rana Thakur)

Wife (i) ... (D)

Wife (ii) :—*Badaliya*

1st d. Basanto (Married)

2nd d. Kala (Married)

1st s. Ram Nath (11 years)

3rd d. Dropadi (7 years)

4th d. Sulochan (5 years)

2nd s. Lala (3 years)

Younger brother : Jwala Prasad.

Wife:—Sampwati

1st s. Jawant Singh (8 years)

Younger brother : Ajodhya Prasad.

Wife:—Bhikani

1st d. Shanti (6 years)

2nd d. Sawitri (2 years)

House 7. *Madan Lal* (Rana Thakur)

(Khaparehal) Wife : Pachiya.

1st d. Juganiya (Married)

1st s. Bhagwandas (9 years)

2nd s. Rup Singh (6 years)

3rd s. Ram Swarup (4 years)

House 8. *Bhagmal* (Rana Thakur) (Came from Nepal)

Wife : ... (D)

1st s. Bhajana.

Wife : *Chaniya*

1st d. ... died

2nd d. Chamariya (2 years)

1st. s. Bhangi (10 years)

2nd s. Babu (6 years)

2nd s. Baldew Singh (30 years)

(unmarried, servant at
House 2)

House 9. *Palte Ram* (Gosain) Came from Mohanpur.

Wife : *Jhajjo*

1st d. Bilado (Married a Gosain Hori
Lal of Mohanpur)

2nd d. Mantora (Married a Gosain
Raja Ram of the same village)

3rd d. Parwato (Married a Gosain Ganga
Ram of Alabirdi village)

4 Sons ... (D)

5th s. Ganga Ram (5 years)

4th d. Sita (2 years)

House 10. *Mahraj Singh* (Rana Thakur)(Khaparchal) Wife : *Ghumani*

1st s. ... (D)

2nd s. Ghanto (15 years) Dumb, unmarried.

3rd s. Anand Singh (11 years)

1st d. ... (D)

4th s. Sukhram Singh (5 years)

House 11. *Dwarka Parsad* (Gosain)Wife : *Mullo*

1st d. Ram Kalo (D)

2nd d. Dayamanti.

1st s. Ram Murti.

3rd d. Camwati (D)

4th d. ... (D)

2nd s. Kedar Singh (4 years)

5th d. Biramawati (2 years) engaged with the son of Pothi Ram.

House 12. *Pothi Rom* (Gosain)

Wife (i) Bhagola (D)

1st s. ... (D)

Wife (ii) Phatiya (Deserted by her husband)

Wife (iii) *Dullo*

1st s. Nand Kishore (3 years)

1st d. Lalli ($\frac{1}{18}$ year)House 13. *Bhagwant Singh* (Rana Thakur)Wife : *Manakiya* (D)

1st s. Ganga Ram (D)

2nd s. Tika Ram (D)

1st d. Batts (D)

2nd d. Ghumani (D)

3rd s. Bhajana (Married)

Wife : *Chaniya*

2 daughters ... (D)

3 sons ... (D)

3rd d. Chamariya
(Married)

4th s. Bhangi (11
years), (Married)

5th s. Babu Ram
(6 years)

4th s. Baldew (21 years, unmarried)

House 14. *Mulli* (Gosain)

Wife : *Batase*

1st s. Raja Ram

Wife : Mantora

1st d. Lalli (D)

2nd d. Ram Pyari
(2 years)

2nd s. Chhote Lal.

Wife (i) Devki (Divorced,
compensation
Rs. 350)

(ii) Imarato (Dola
marriage Rs. 340)

3rd s. Raghunath (D)

4th s. Prem Singh (D)

1st d. Badaliya (D)

2nd d. Ghuma (D)

3rd d. Bhajja (Married)

4th d. Bidyawati (7 years) engaged in
the same village

5th s. Kali Singh (D)

6th s. Ram Singh (D)

House 15. *Bandhu* (Rana Thakur)

Wife : Andhiya (D)

1st s. Braj Lal (D)

1st d. Lalli (D)

2nd d. Janaki (D)

2nd s. Badam Singh (Married)

Wife : Mullo

1st d. Sombati (3 years)

2nd d. ... ($1\frac{1}{2}$ year)

3rd d. Imarata (D)

- 4th d. Lalli (D)
 3rd s. Ram Parsad (D)
 4th s. Govind Singh (6 years)
 5th s. Kaidi (D)

House 16. *Lachhman* (Nachakaiya) (Gosain)

Wife : *Kuna*

- 1st d. Phulamti (10 years)
 1st s. Raghubir (7 years)
 2nd d. ... (D)
 2nd s. ... (D)
 3rd d. ... (D)

House 17. *Sohan* (Gosain)

Wife : *Soki*

- 1st d. ... (D)
 2nd d. Bandho (Married)
 3rd d. Gomati (7 years)
 4th d. Lilawati (5 years)
 1st s. Ram Sarup (4 years)
 5th d. ... (1 year)

House 18. *Sankar* (Gosain)

Wife (i) Lali ... (D)

- 1st d. Samrdan (11 years)
 2nd d. Jhanakiya (8 years)
 1st s. ... (D)
 2nd s. ... (D)
 3rd s. ... (D)

House 19. *Chhediya* (Dangra)

Wife : *Puniya*

- 1st d. Dewakiya (D)
 1st s. Madan (D)
 2nd d. Lila (6 years)
 3rd d. Kemini.

Brother Mangali

Wife : Purani

- 1st d. ... (D)
 2nd d. ... (D)

1st s. ... (D)
3rd d. Bandhiya (2 years)

House 20. *Man Singh* (Dangra)

Wife : Chhediya.

1st s. Parsadi (D)
2nd s. Prem Singh (D)
3rd s. Bhola Singh (servant of House
2) married.

Wife : Mulli

1st s. Phul Singh (D)
4th s. Harnam Singh (4 years)

House 21. *Mohan* (Gosain)

Wife (i) Sikkam ... (D)

1st d. Ram Kali (Married)
2nd d. Kalawati (Married)
3rd d. Prem Wati (6 years)
1st s. Alakh Singh (4 years)
4th d. ... (D)
2nd s. ... (D)

Wife (ii) *Chhunna* (Widow of his elder brother Jhinga)

Step-childern : 1st d. Bhagoli (Married)

2nd d. Lilawati (Married)

House 22. *Jhalli* (Rana Thakur)

Wife : *Muniya*

1st d. Samodar (12 years)
2nd d. Jamuna (D)
3rd d. ... (D)
1st s. ... (D)
4th d. Balto (7 years)
2nd s. Shri Govind (3 years)
3rd s. Braj Lal (1 year)

House 23. *Kallu Ram* (Gosain)

Wife : Mantora

1st d. Rambati (3 years)
1st s. Madan Lal ($\frac{1}{2}$ years)

House 24. Budhiya (Gosain) Widow.

Grand son Ram Charan (20 years, dumb and insane)

House 25. Chhoti (Gosain blind widow)

House 26. Jagannath (Rana Thakur)

wife (i) ... (D)

wife (ii) Bindra (Widow of his elder brother)

(Divorce due to polygyny)

wife (iii) Dwarka.

1st s. Hira Lal (Married)

wife : Badaliya.

1st d. Rewato (Married)

2nd d. Sukhi (9 years)

3rd d. Chandrawati (1 year)

(Engaged with the son of

Jai Ram of the same village)

Elder Brother: Nathu (D) (Rana Thakur)

Wife: *Jhingiya* (Widow)

1st s. Karn singh (12 years)

House 27. *Bali Ram* (Gosain)

wife : Ghuma

1st s. Ram Singh (D)

2nd s. ... (D)

1st d. Dorki (Married)

3rd s. ... (D)

2nd d. Dropadi (7 years)

4th s. Munna Lal (4 years)

5th s. ... (D)

House 28. *Bandhu* (Rana Thakur)

wife : *Niraso*

1st d. Ariya (D)

1st s. Jogi (D)

2nd d. Muriya (Married with Jhalli in the same village)

3rd d. Mango (Married)

2nd s. Bairagi (D)

3rd s. Phiru (Married), a peon in the Veterinary Hospital at Khetma.

Wife : Lila

4th s. Gopi (D)

4th d. Badaliya (10 years)

5th s. Siwcharan (7 years)

5th d. Suki (D)

6th s. Ram Charan(D)

Nieces Chhiddu (8 years)

Phiriya (6 years)

House 29. *Krishan Lal* (Gosain)

Wife : *Bhajjo*

1st s. Braj Lal (8 years)

1st d. Rambati (5 years)

2nd d. Rukamawati (3 years)

3rd d. Kusumabati (2 years) engaged
in the same village.

House 30. *Ram Lal* (Gosain)

Wife (i) Phula (D)

1st d. Ketaki (10 years)

Wife (ii) *Rammo*

1st S. Karn Singh (5 years)

2nd s. Munna (3 years) engaged with
Kusumabati in 29.

APPENDIX II

GENEALOGIES

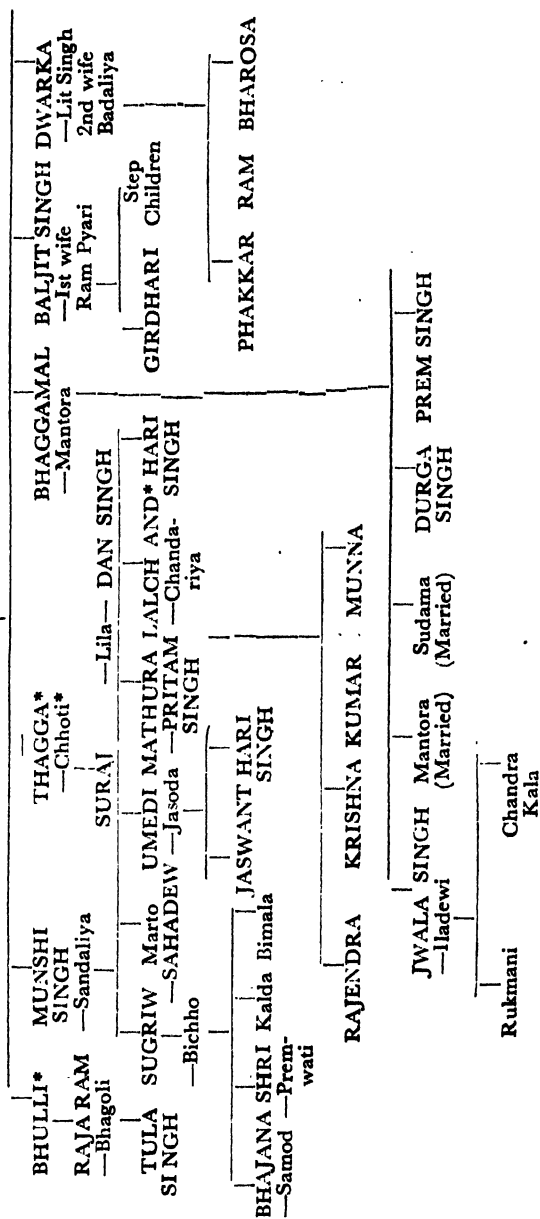
I have collected fifty genealogies of the Tharus belonging to various walks of life, for example, *Padhan*, *Mustajar*, *Bharara*, teacher, patwari, peon and ordinary cultivator. But only a sample of six genealogies is given.

The names of male members are given in block letters and those of females in small letters. The names of dead persons are marked with asteric* and the names of those who died before marriage have been omitted.

GENEALOGY No. II

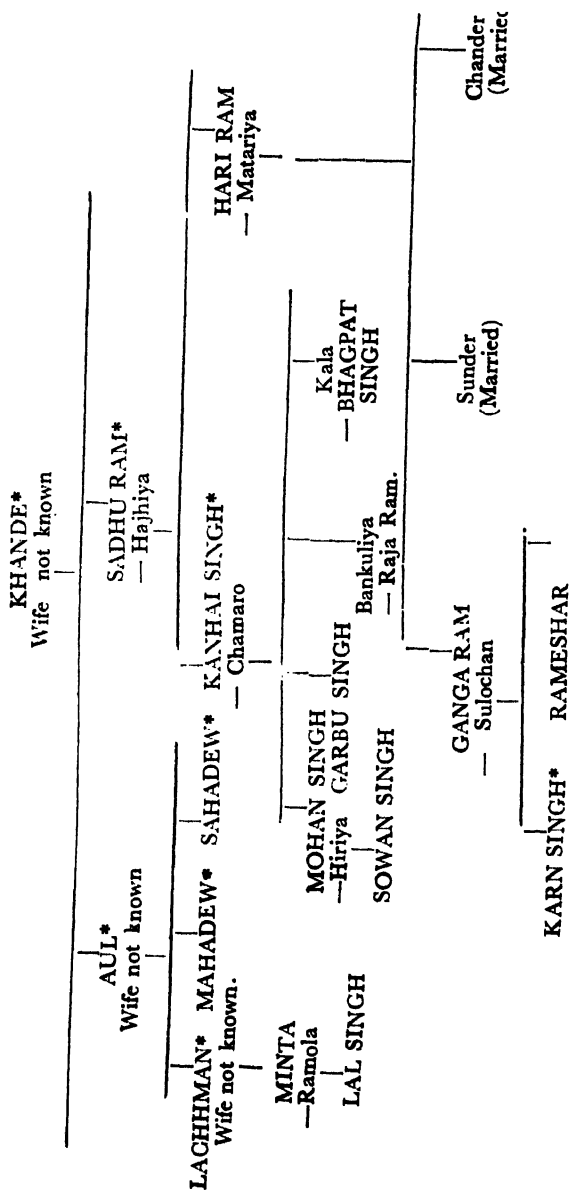
Bhaggamal (Bharara) of Naugamanath Bisaunta SEWA*
(Wife not known)

BANDHU*
—Sukiya*



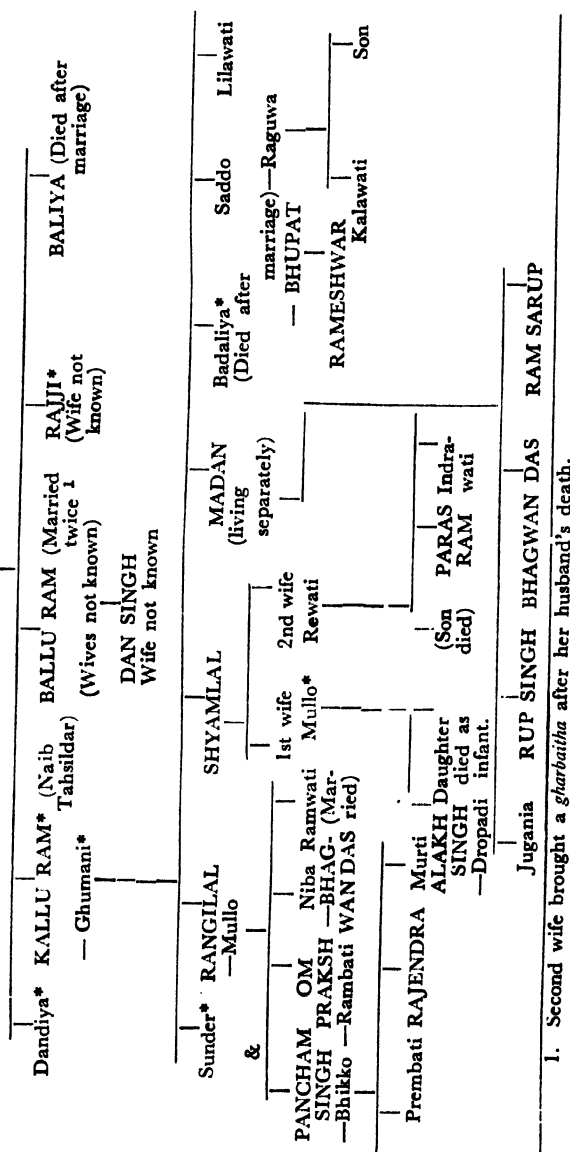
GENEALOGY No III

HARI RAM (School teacher at Sitarganj Primary School) of Pattikhera.



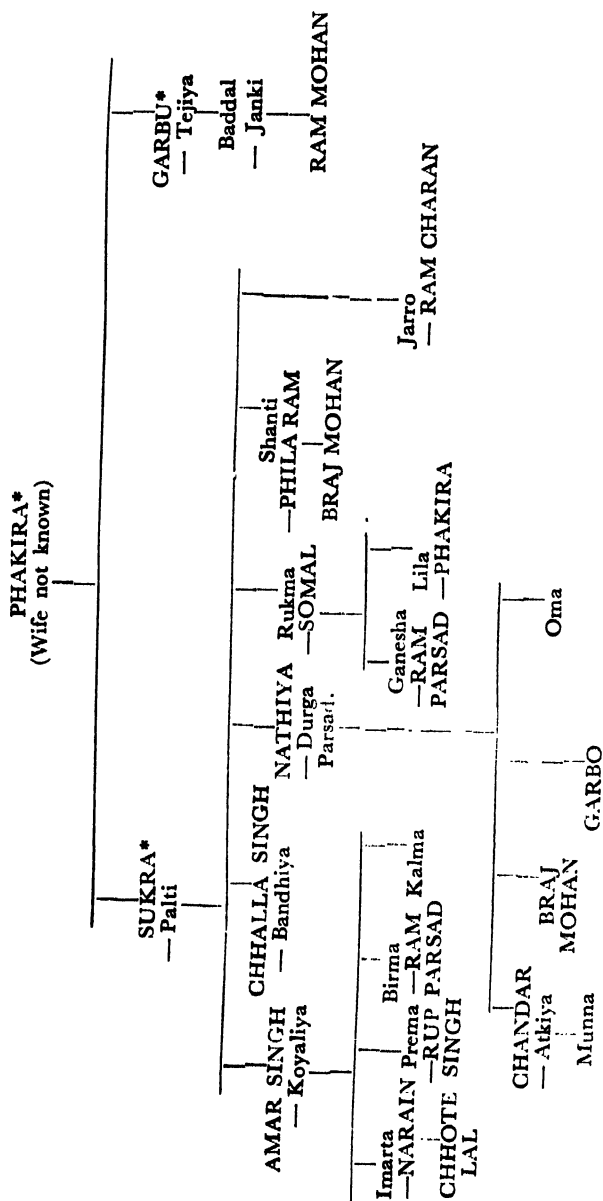
GENEALOGY No. IV

SHYAM LAL (Patwari of Khetasanda Kham)

PHAGU RAM*
(Wife not known)

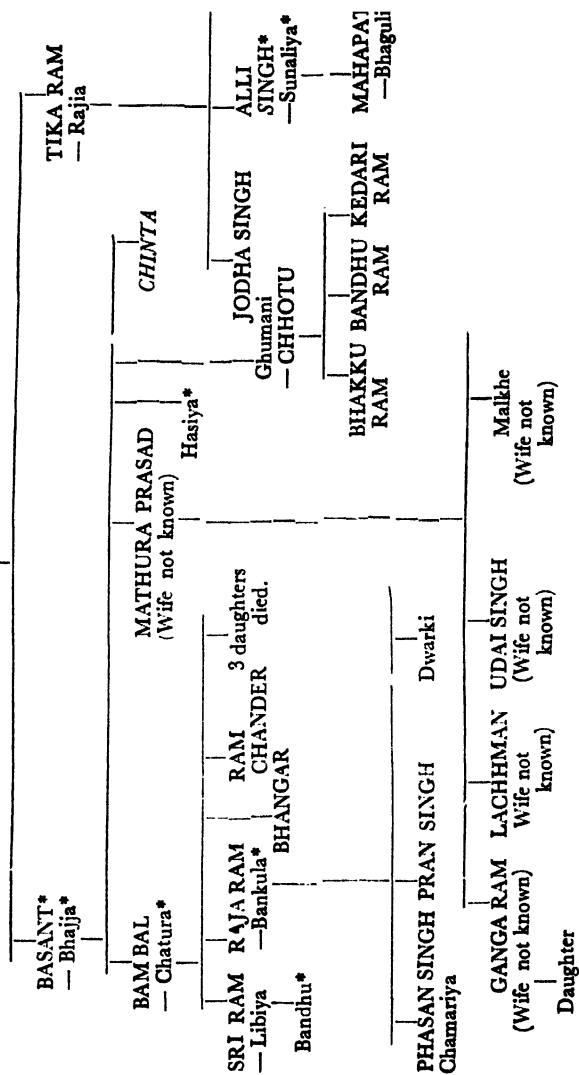
GENEALOGY No. V

CHHALLA (Peon) of Jhankat.



GENEALOGY No. VI

BAMBAL (BATHA) OF RAMPURA (Came from Village Anjanika)

CHHEDA*
— Bhaguliya

APPENDIX III

Tharu Language and Classified Glossary

In Volumes V and IX of the Linguistic Survey of India Grierson has briefly discussed the language of the Tarai. According to Grierson the Tharus do not have a language of their own and speak more or less correctly the language of Aryan races with whom they are in immediate contact. For instance, the Tharus of the north of Purnea appear to speak a corrupt form of the Eastern Maithili spoken in that District, those of Champaran, a corrupt Bhojpuri and those of the Naini Tal Tarai, the ordinary Western Hindi of the locality.¹ It is too much to say that the Tharus have altogether lost their original dialect, Tharuhati, as they call it. Grierson even seems to ignore the fact that the Tharus ever had a language of their own. Another misrepresentation of facts, which has been made in this survey is that Tharuhati, the language of the Tharus, has been identified completely with a 'mongrel dialect Bhuksa employed by only one tribe Bhoksa' and classed as Brajbhasha, though a large number of words from Kamauni, Hindi, Urdu, and Kanauji languages have also been assimilated in this dialect. The Survey has neglected the difference between the two dialects, Tharuhati and Bhuksa. Moreover, these dialects are spoken by the Tharus and Bhoksas respectively who live apart from each other in different parganas. The dividing line between these two people is the Hindu and Muslim population with their different dialects.

The language of the Tharus is itself a good subject for a comprehensive research which may repay the investigations of any linguist, philologist or ethnographer. But here it can be safely said with all propriety on the basis of the specimens of their language collected in the form of oral literature and conversation given in this work that the language of the Tharus of Naini Tal Tarai is certainly a mixed dialect drawn from the Hindi, Urdu, Kamauni, Kanauji and Brajbhasha but it is more akin to Brajbhasha (a form of W. Hindi) than to any one of these languages.

¹ Grierson, *Linguistic Survey of India*, Vol. V, Part II, p.

An attempt has been made to indicate in the classified glossary given below the origin of different words of other languages which have been adopted and assimilated in Tharu language. In order to make the Tharu language as easy as possible for the general reader, words have been explained to their nearest meaning. Words explained in the text are generally omitted and those without reference belong to the original dialect of the Tharus.

B=Brajbhasha, Ku=Kamauni, K=Kanauji, H=Hindi, S=Sanskrit, U=Urdu.

Administrative

<i>Padhan</i> (S)	A headman of a village (broken form of the word Pradhan, meaning the chief in Sanskrit).
<i>Mustajar</i> (U)	A contractor.
<i>Thekedar</i> (H)	A contractor.
<i>Panchayat</i> (H)	A Judicial Committee normally of five persons.
<i>Panch</i> (H)	A member of the <i>Panchayat</i> .
<i>Sarpanch</i> (H)	A person presiding over a <i>Panchayat</i> .
<i>Patti</i> (H)	A group of houses forming part of a village.
<i>Pargana</i> (U)	Sub-division of a tahsil.
<i>Tahsil</i> (U)	Sub-division of a district.
<i>Wajib-ul-Arz</i> (U)	According to the rules.
<i>Sarwarakar</i> (H)	A Manager having all the rights.
<i>Kham</i> (U)	Belonging to the Government.
<i>Kotwar</i> (H)	A man who serves all the villagers and is paid only in kind.

Villages and Houses

<i>Kh.ra</i>	A village.
<i>Ghar</i> (H)	A house.
<i>Chauka</i> (H)	A kitchen.
<i>Tarwaha</i>	A verandah.
<i>Bangala</i>	A guest house, or a sitting room.
<i>Bari</i> (H)	A kitchen garden.
<i>Bagh</i>	The fields near the house, which are carefully manured and where the most valued crops are grown.
<i>Angana</i> (B)	Courtyard.
<i>Sar</i>	A cattle-shed.
<i>Saira</i>	A lane.

Articles for Daily Use

<i>Supa</i>	Winnowing pan.
<i>Hukka</i> (U)	Hubble-bubble.

<i>Tamakhu</i> (H)	Tobacco.
<i>Lola</i> (H)	A mug.
<i>Gilas</i> (H)	A glass.
<i>Chakko</i> (H)	A knife.

Household Goods and Furniture

<i>Kulhia</i> (B)	An earthen granary.
<i>Kuthala</i> (B)	An earthen granary.
<i>Bakhari</i> (H)	A kind of granary.
<i>Chaurasiya</i> (B)	An earthen safe.
<i>Pitara</i> (H)	A box of wicker or cane.
<i>Barosi</i>	An earthen pot to keep fire.
<i>K'hatiya</i> (H)	A cot.
<i>Dhenki</i> (H)	A Rice-husking machine.

Fishing

<i>Jhapiya</i> (B)	A kind of Basket.
<i>Pakhiya</i> (B)	A small fishing net.
<i>Thathi</i>	A fishing net made of cane or wicker.
<i>Jariya</i> (B)	A fishing net made of thread.
<i>Jal</i> (H)	A fishing net made of thread.
<i>Dhimari</i>	A fishing trap made of bamboo chips.
<i>Lauka</i> (B)	A hollowed pumpkin to keep small fish.
<i>Gadari</i>	A small handy basket to keep fish.
<i>Bhank</i>	A large fishing net to be used only by four people.
<i>Supa</i>	A fishing trap made of wicker.
<i>Khong</i>	A small trap made of bamboo chips.
<i>Udhar</i>	A long trap made of bamboo chips.

Hunting

<i>Shikari</i> (U)	A great hunter.
<i>Banduk</i> (U)	A gun.
<i>Kudhaka</i>	A wooden appliance to catch deer.
<i>Khabar</i>	A long net made of ropes.
<i>Gola</i> (H)	Balls.

Agriculture

<i>Machan</i> (H)	A field hut made for watching over the crops at night.
<i>Hal</i> (H)	A plough.
<i>Phal</i> (H)	A ploughshare.
<i>Kilwai</i> (B)	A wooden appliance to upturn the earth after ploughing.
<i>Patala</i> (H)	A soil leveller.
<i>Juwa</i> (H)	A yoke.

<i>Supa</i> (B)	Winnowing pan.
<i>Chhapariya</i> (B)	A winnowing pan.
<i>Jotana</i> (H)	Ploughing.
<i>Osauni</i> (B)	Winnowing.
<i>Nikana</i> (H)	Weeding.
<i>Marawni</i> (B)	Thrashing.
<i>Paral</i> (B)	Residual land.
<i>Kharif</i> (U)	Spring crop.
<i>Rabi</i> (U)	Autumn crop.
<i>Dhan</i> (H)	Paddy.
<i>Tekhari</i> (B)	A balance.
<i>Hathaura</i> (H)	A hammer.
<i>Bhusa</i> (H)	Wheat Chaff.
<i>Asami</i> (U)	A cultivator.
<i>Baradiya</i> (B)	A herdsman.
<i>Dangar</i> (B)	Cattle.

Dress and Ornaments

<i>Kacha</i> (B)	A piece of loin cloth four to six yards long and one yard wide.
<i>Phatuhi</i> (K)	A kind of waist-coat.
<i>Langota</i> (B)	A piece of cloth.
<i>Paula</i> (B)	Wooden sandals.
<i>Ghanghariya</i> (B)	A skirt.
<i>Udhaniya</i> (B)	A piece of black cloth 2½ yards long.
<i>Got</i> (B)	Border of a sari or skirt.
<i>Choli</i> (B)	A bodice.
<i>Pagari</i> (B)	A turban.
<i>Jhagiya</i> (B)	A kind of loose garment.
<i>Sutaniya</i> (B)	A trousers.
<i>Alaga</i> (B)	A piece of cloth around the waist.
<i>Patuka</i> (B)	A long handkerchief.
<i>Duriya</i> (B)	Silver rings.
<i>Kharuwa</i> (B)	Small bracelets.
<i>Mudariya</i> (H)	Silver rings.
<i>Nathuni</i> (H)	A nose ring.
<i>Kauri</i> (H)	Cowries.
<i>Sippi</i> (H)	Small shells.
<i>Tarputiya</i>	A kind of ear-rings.
<i>Jhumka</i> (K)	Ear-rings worn in the lobe.
<i>Jhibi</i>	A kind of ear-rings.
<i>Lilla</i> (B)	Tattooing.

Food

<i>Roti</i> (H)	The ordinary wheat cakes.
<i>Bhat</i>	Boiled rice.

<i>Dal</i>	Pulses.
<i>Sarson</i>	Mustard oil.
<i>Chakhana</i>	Curry.
<i>Puri (H)</i>	Fried cakes in oil or ghee.
<i>Phara</i>	A rice preparation.
<i>Nimak (H)</i>	Salt.
<i>Machhi</i>	Fried fish.

Economic Relationship.

<i>Bonda</i>	Debt-bondage or bonded service.
<i>Adhiya (Ku)</i>	The practice of distributing produce equally between the cultivator and his landlord.
<i>Begar (H)</i>	The custom of taking free and forced labour from the villagers.
<i>Biyaj (K)</i>	Interest.
<i>Udhar (H)</i>	On loan.
<i>Manjuri (H)</i>	Wages.

Social Relationship

<i>Kuri</i>	A generic name.
<i>Biradari (H)</i>	Castemen.
<i>Roti</i>	Feast.
<i>Gharjamai (H)</i>	A son-in-law living with his father-in-law.
<i>Jati Sudhar Sabha (H)</i>	A conference of social reformers.
<i>Jethi (B)</i>	The wife of the eldest son.
<i>Manjhali (B)</i>	wife of the junior son.
<i>Lohari (B)</i>	Wife of the juniormost son.
<i>Jutha (H)</i>	Food left over in a plate.
<i>Dilawar (U)</i>	A friend.
<i>Mit (B)</i>	A friend.
<i>Sangan (B)</i>	A female friend.
<i>Dai (H)</i>	A midwife.
<i>Maika (B)</i>	Parents' house.
<i>Sosura (B)</i>	Husband's house.
<i>Jethani (H)</i>	Husband's elder brother's wife.
<i>Dewrani (H)</i>	Husband's younger brother's wife.
<i>Kunaba (H)</i>	Blood relatives.

Birth And Marriage Ceremonies

<i>Chhathi (H)</i>	Purification ceremony six days after child birth.
<i>Mundan (H)</i>	Hair-cutting ceremony.
<i>Bihaw (B)</i>	Wedding.
<i>Dikhnauri (B)</i>	Betrothal.
<i>Manjhapatiya (B)</i>	Intermediary between bridegroom's and bride's families.

<i>Dekhnars</i> (B)	The guests from the girl's village.
<i>Tika</i>	Ceremony of anointing the boy by the girl's father at Dikhnauri.
<i>Dulha</i> (H)	A bridegroom.
<i>Dulhin</i> (H)	A bride.
<i>Dhimar</i> (H)	Palanquin lifters.
<i>Karbaris</i> (U)	Workers.
<i>Bhanwar</i> (H)	Circum-ambulation.
<i>Saptapadi</i> (H)	The custom of making seven rounds around the fire.
<i>Kalewa</i> (H)	Ceremonial feast.
<i>Mot gherai</i>	Obstructing the door by brother-in-law of the bridegroom.
<i>Kaj</i>	Widow-remarriage.
<i>Urari</i>	Marriage between divorced persons.
<i>Dola</i>	Marriage by money compensation.

Religion

<i>Jiw</i> (H)	Soul.
<i>Than</i>	A place of worship.
<i>Lashkar</i> (U)	An army.
<i>Bhut</i> (H)	An Evil Spirit.
<i>Churelin</i> (H)	A female evil spirit.
<i>Thakur</i> (H)	Supreme God.
<i>Pirs</i> (U)	Renowned saints.
<i>Banaspati</i> (H)	A Jungle Spirit.
<i>Parwatiya</i>	A Hill Spirit.
<i>Paigambar</i> (U)	A Muslim messenger of God.
<i>Nagarai</i>	Presiding deity of the village.
<i>Hom</i> (S)	Placing of <i>ghee</i> , sandal wood powder and sweets on fire, in the name of some deity.
<i>Bhent</i>	An offer.

Festivals

<i>Hori</i> (B)	Spring festival.
<i>Bari Charai</i>	Spring festival of women.
<i>Asadhi</i>	Festival both for public and private worship of gods.
<i>Tij</i>	A festival observed on the third day in the month of <i>Sawan</i> (July-August).
<i>Janmastami</i> (H)	The birth day of Lord Krishna.
<i>Aunth</i>	Festival of paddy harvest.
<i>Diwali</i>	The day of calling back the spirit of the deceased.
<i>Tajna</i> (S)	A holy offering to a god or goddess.
<i>Sinni</i> (U)	Sweets offered to a Pir's shrine.

Magic

<i>Bharara</i>	A magician, spirit-doctor and religious priest.
<i>Bharrai</i>	The art of a <i>Bharara</i> .
<i>Ganwat</i>	The village under the supervision of a <i>Bharara</i> .
<i>Tona</i>	The power of the 'evil eye'.
<i>Mantra (S)</i>	Charmed words and phrases.
<i>Najar (H)</i>	Evil eye.
<i>Mohini (B)</i>	Love magic.

Diseases

<i>Sitala (H)</i>	Small-pox. The name of the goddess after which this disease is known.
<i>Adhaukhi (H)</i>	Headache.
<i>Subiya</i>	Pneumonia.
<i>Gamhir</i>	A kind of boil.
<i>Bukhar (U)</i>	Fever.

Dances And Songs

<i>Sadi Holi Nach</i>	Men and women dance separately.
<i>Khichari Holi Nach</i>	Mixed dance of men and women.
<i>Tharuha Nach</i>	A national dance of the Tharus.
<i>Nachakiya</i>	A dancer.
<i>Lai (H)</i>	Tune.
<i>Sam (H)</i>	Rhythm.
<i>Git (B)</i>	A song.
<i>Dhol</i>	A big drum.
<i>Miradang (H)</i>	A kind of drum.
<i>Dholak</i>	A small drum for women.
<i>Jhanjh</i>	Cymbals.

Games and Riddles

<i>Khel (H)</i>	A game.
<i>Raja</i>	A King, the leader of a game.
<i>Kahaniya</i>	Riddles.
<i>Bujhaw</i>	To solve the riddle.

Daily Programme

<i>Sabere (H)</i>	Early morning.
<i>Murga bole</i>	Cock crow.
<i>Dupahari (B)</i>	Noon.
<i>Sepahari (B)</i>	Late after-noon.
<i>Sanjha (B)</i>	Sun-set.
<i>Adhirat</i>	Midnight.
<i>Rat</i>	Night.

Astronomy

<i>Badal</i> (H)	Clouds.
<i>Garaje</i> (B)	Thunder.
<i>Bijili</i> (H)	Lightning.
<i>Suraj</i> (H)	Sun.
<i>Chanda</i> (B)	Moon.
<i>Tare</i> (H)	Stars.
<i>Girahan</i> (H)	Eclipse.

Ethics

<i>Sach</i> (H)	Truth.
<i>Pap</i> (H)	Sin.
<i>Pun</i> (B)	Virtue.
<i>Chori</i> (B)	Theft.
<i>Katal</i> (U)	Murder.

Trees, Shrubs and Creepers

<i>Bans</i>	Bamboo, <i>dendrocalamus strictus</i> .
<i>Samur</i>	Cotton tree, <i>Bombax malabaricum</i> .
<i>Peepal</i>	<i>Ficus religiosa</i> , the most sacred tree in India.
<i>Jamun.</i>	<i>Eugenia jambolana</i> , the black plum.
<i>Shisham</i>	<i>Dalbergia latifolia</i> , Indian rosewood.
<i>Am</i>	<i>Mangifera indica</i> , the mango.
<i>Bel</i>	<i>Aegle marmelos</i> , the tree sacred to the Hindus.
<i>Khair</i>	<i>Acacia catechu</i> .
<i>Imli</i>	<i>Tamarindus indica</i> .
<i>Mahua</i>	<i>Basia latifolia</i> .
<i>Sal</i>	<i>Shorea robusta</i> .
<i>Ghunghuchi</i>	<i>Abrus precatorius</i> , the bright red seeds are used as beads and as goldsmith's weights.

Miscellaneous

<i>Saycal</i> (English)	Bicycle.
<i>Sabun</i> (H)	Soap.
<i>La'tane</i> (H)	A Hurricane lantern.
<i>Chay</i> (H)	Tea.
<i>Relgari</i> (English)	Railway train.
<i>Motoriya</i> (English)	A motor car.
<i>Hat</i>	Market.
<i>Mela</i> (H)	Fair.

APPENDIX IV

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